

SKRATCH

Issue 108

The Haunted
Bury Your Dead
Symphony In Peril
Exmortem
The Goodwill
Usurper
Narcoleptic Youth
Over It
Glory Of This
Halfwayhome
Instilled
We Us. The Shark
The Felix Culpa
Single Bullet Theory
I Killed The Prom Queen
Frankenstein
Deep Eynde





MAY 2005



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Why Haven't You Heard i can make a mess like nobody's business

"THANK THE SONIC GODS FOR ACE ENDERS'S MESS."

--Amplifier Magazine

"4 out of 5"
--Alternative Press

"Masterpiece...absolutely incredible."
--AbsolutePunk.net

"Confident and full at parts, vulnerable
and breaking at others...."
--Billboard

"Ace Enders is a genius."
--SilentSkyMedia.com

"It feels honest and upright. It feels direct
and to the source...like he's right outside
your window. Right inside your car. Like
you could look at him and ask him what he
means by this line or the next. It's fabulous.
By far, one of the best acoustic albums I have
ever heard."
--WrankMusic.com

"I Can Make A Mess is an amazingly cohesive
album filled with fully charged rock fury,
foot-stomping folk/punk anthems and acoustic
ballads of sparse and haunting beauty, all of it
featuring Enders' impossibly mature-for-a-22
year-old lyrical observation."
--Amplifier Magazine

"The artistic value is high and heavy throughout
this adventurous recording."
--Highwire Daze

"A must have."
--FamousPunk.com

"If you are looking for something fresh, unique,
and just plain amazing, be sure to pick up this
album. A beautiful blend of organized chaos...
Enders pushes music to a new level. 9.5/10"
--TragicEndings.com

"Passionate lyrics...brilliant writing...truly
refreshing and inspiring."
--PlayThemLoud.com

"Confident, powerful, and progressive this album
digs straight through to the bottom of simplicity,
then quickly yanks back up with a force of lyrical
beauty and accompanying synth."
--MusicEmissions.com

"Anyone with a will to experiment in new
aspects of music should purchase this beauty."
--DrivingThru.co.uk

"This album stands out amongst a music
scene of similar bands and creates something
truly unique."
--BreakingCustom.com

"The tracks have certain qualities that make
them all beautifully different. This album has
proved the hype..."
--UtterPunk.com

"I Can Make A Mess will make you sit down,
shut up and think about life's ups and downs
...it will move you on some level. 4/5."
--EWO-Punk.com

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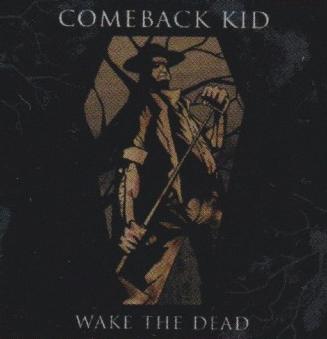
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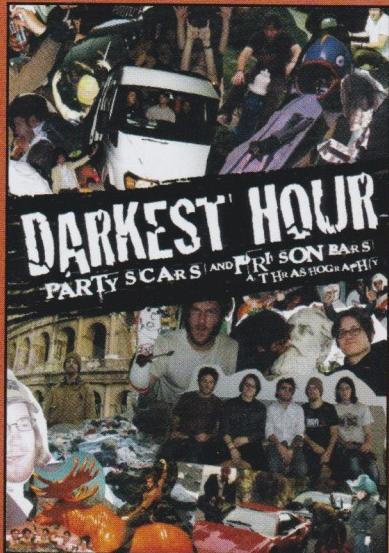
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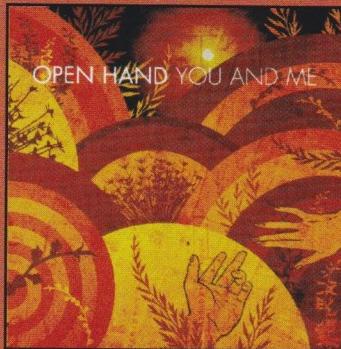
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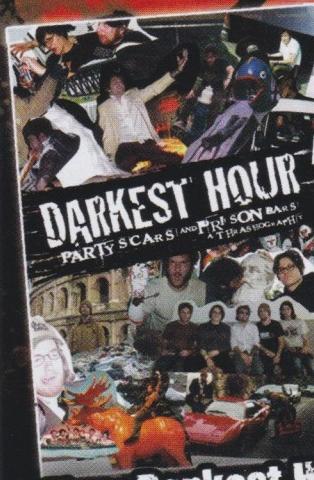


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New Darkest Hour album
Summer 2005



SOCIETY 1

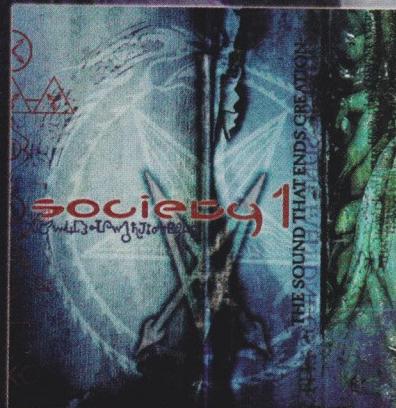
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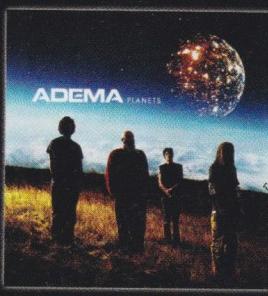
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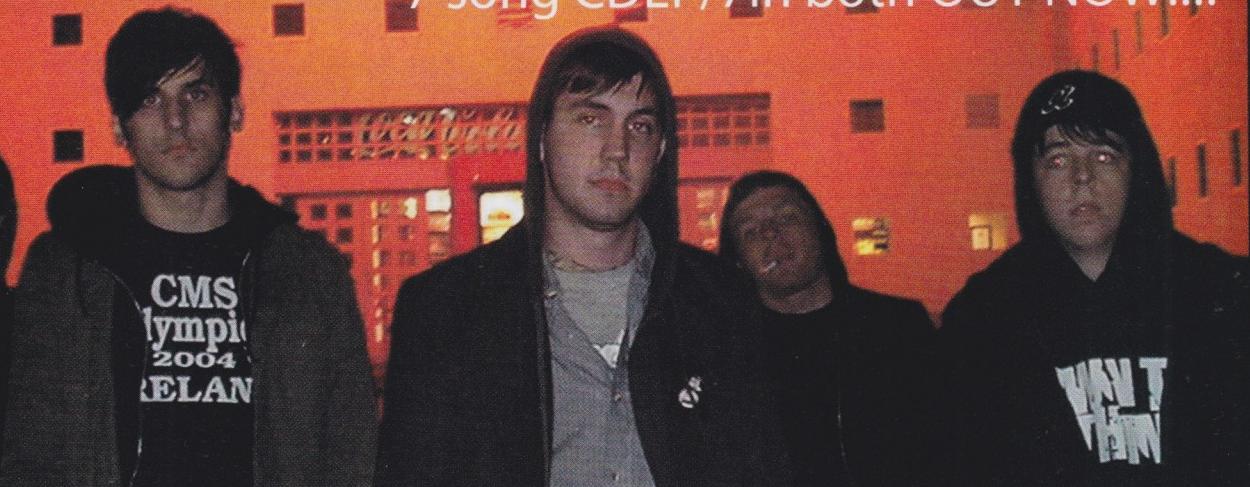


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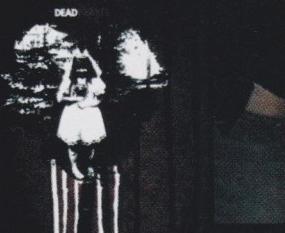
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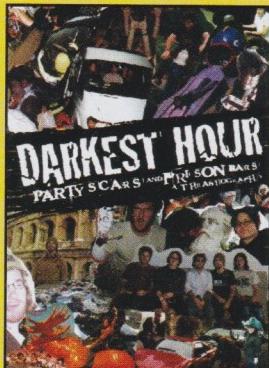
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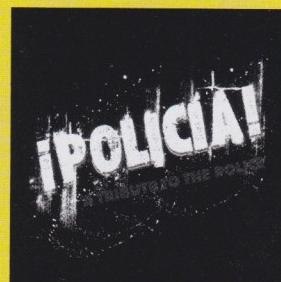
GREENE
RECORDS



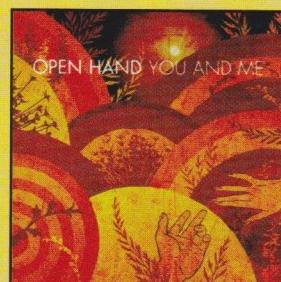
DARKEST HOUR DVD



SYMPHONY IN PERIL

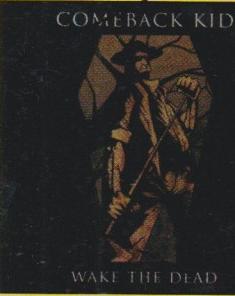


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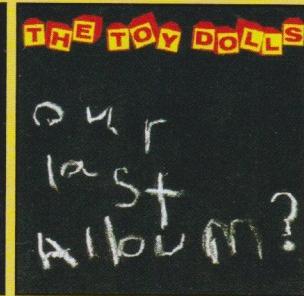


OPEN HAND

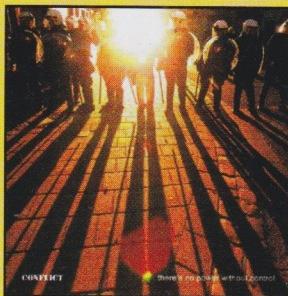
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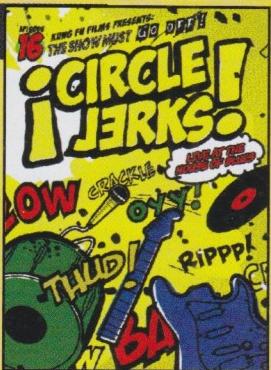
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SHOWCASE SHOWDOWN
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 THE SOCIAL PATHS
 ROSES AT DAWN * FBI
 DURDEN * MY VOICE IS
 STRONGER * BLACK TIE
 OPTIONAL * A BILLION
 ERNIES * NEFARIOUS
 DEATH SQUAD

SUN FEB 20

Final Death
 COLD WAR
 OBLIGE CROWNE
 adora

THU FEB 24

Merauder Hoods
 The RISK TAKEN
 agents man
 WINDS BROKEN
 OF PLAGUE FOUNDATION

SAT FEB 26

from a second
 story window
 the ACACIA strain
 INTO THE MOAT
 the red death
 PLAGUE RED LETTERS

THU MAR 3

NEVEA TEARS
 Divide The Day
 RED LETTER DAY
 MANHATTAN SKYLINE ALURE

SAT MAR 5

Bygone Industries presents
 Revenge & Retribution
SCREAMS OF SERENITY
 mesolimbic
 DARK HAVEN
 FROM AGONY WITHIN
 YOU ARE SWITZERLAND * POLAR BEAR

SAT FEB 19

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 PLAY DEAD PRESENT
 from 9:30pm - 2:00am

WED FEB 23

Monster

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 Industrial, Darkwave, Goth
 EBM, Electro, & New Wave

FRI FEB 25

semi-final
 showcase showdown
 silas * allusions of
 warhol * euclid
 3 point circle
 truth holds
 last blood * arkaik
 suffer the heat
 straten * vulgar

SUN FEB 27

LETTERKILL
 SQUAD FIVE-φ
 STUTTERFLY
 ADAIR

FRI MAR 4

THE UNSEEN
 PISTOL CRIP
 BRAIN FAILURE RAMALLAH
 Career Soldiers

SUN MAR 6

SHOWCASE SHOWDOWN
 PURPLE VOMIT * TOKYO
 STATIC * FANCY MYSELF IN
 SOHO * PERFECT FIT
 SILENT AGE * ORANGEBURG
 MASSACRE * ELEMENTS OF
 FICTION * BLESSED ARE
 THE DEAD * SCATICA
 TOXIC TOYS

THU MAR 10

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

BLACKLISTED
 COLD WORLD plus
 SNAKE EYES special
 guests

SAT MAR 12

Funeral Dress
 RESILIENCE
 THE GENERATORS plus
 THE AGITATORS special
 guests

WED MAR 16

NEHEMIAH
 THE FINAL BURDEN
 FINALFIGHT
 EVERYMAN 4 himself
 PLAGUE OF SHEOL

FRI MAR 18

★ **FACEDOWN FEST 2005** ★
NO INNOCENT VICTIM
 BODY SHAY THE DEAL JESUS WEPT
 last show
 IN DUE TIME Chat Convictions
 BRUTAL FIGHT
 BRADLEY HATHAWAY
 performing in between sets

SAT MAR 19

★ **FACEDOWN FEST 2005** ★
SYMPHONY IN PERIL NGES OF
 RAVIER INKED IN BLOOD
 ALOVE FOR ENEMIES
 HIT THE DECK
 BLOODLINED CALLIGRAPHY
 Opposition of One

SUN MAR 20

SHOWCASE SHOWDOWN
 DISTRAWT
 THE AIRLINE HIGHJACKERS
 SERPENT UNDERGROUND
 BETTER LUCK NEXT TIME
 DROWN THIS HEART
 THE HEART OF EVERY CITY
 LAID * PLUS MORE TBA

FRI MAR 25

BANE
 COMEBACK
 WITH HONOR KID
 silent drive

SAT MAR 26

KODI CROSS
 ANGEL CITY OUTLASTS
 STRONG ARM & THE BULLIES
 PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS

FRI MAR 11

oddproject
 ANTERRABAE DREAMS
 OF REALITY plus special guests

SUN MAR 13

Throwdown
 CHARIOT IT DIES TODAY
 COLD WAR



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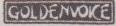
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THE ALLENTONS**

march 5
el rey theatre



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march 3 ► henry fonda theatre



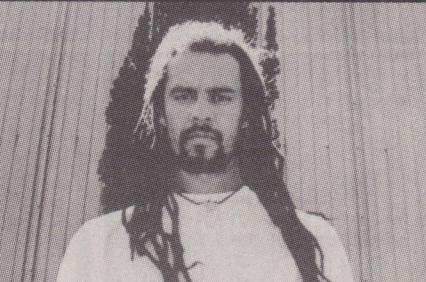
gozelana

Pretty Girls Make Graves

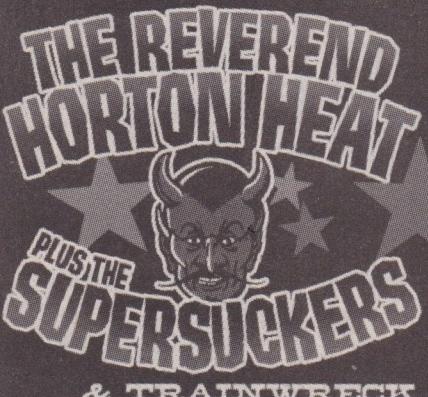


DIOS MALOS • KILL ME TOMORROW
friday march 11 ► el rey theatre

MICHAEL FRANTI & SPEARHEAD



BARGAIN MUSIC
march 17 ► el rey theatre

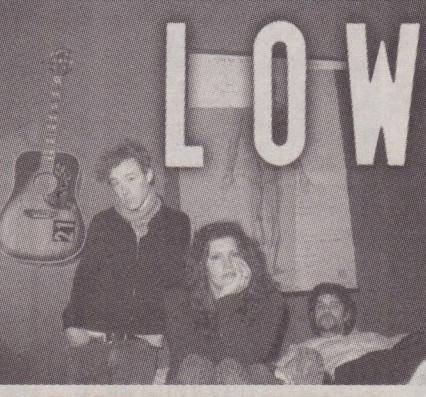


THE REVEREND HORTON HEAT PLUS THE SUPERSUCKERS & TRAINWRECK

friday mar. 18 ► henry fonda theatre



saturday march 26 ► el rey theatre



L - O - W
PEDRO THE LION • LISTING SHIP
march 31 ► el rey theatre

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WED-FEB 23	INDIE ROCK \$12 MAE Bullet Train to Vegas The Strays	FRI-FEB 25	SKA / PUNK \$10 Big D and the Kids Table *** River City Rebels *** The Phenomauts - Los Kung Fu Monkeys	SAT-FEB 26	HARDCORE \$12 7Seconds Groovie Ghoulies Plus Special Guest
SUN-FEB 27	INDUSTRIAL \$10 Babyland This Song is a Mess But So Am I This Love Machine - Aqui	FRI-MAR 4	LAST SHOW \$10 Mind Driver Squad Five-0 Faulter As Night Falls	SAT-MAR 5	INDIE ROCK \$10 Project 86 He is Legend Classic Case Augustana
SUN-MAR 6	INDIE ROCK \$8 Limbeck - Hello Goodbye Steel Train - New Years Day	WED-MAR 10	INDIE ROCK \$8 Gatsbys American Dream Circa Survive Bear Vs. Shark A Fall Farewell	FRI-MAR 11	SCREAMO INDIE \$10 Name Taken "the make up show" Plus Special Guests
SAT-MAR 12	INDIE ROCK \$10 Pax 217 - Jupiter Sunrise The Dane[ger] - Amanda Rogers	FRI-MAR 18	INDIE ROCK \$10 Armor for Sleep - Recover Say Anything - Chase Pagan		

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SHOWS

- Friday Feb 18
Private Party
- Saturday Feb 19
The Devil Bats - Sugarpuss - TFMU
The Threefold Misery - We are the Double Crossed
- Sunday Feb 20
DJ Art spinning the best 50's tunes! w special guests
The Henchman - Knuckledraggers - Insight - Rockets of Love
- Monday Feb 21
Sounds Of Urchin
- Tuesday Feb 22
Noise Pollution - Robots Rising - Hope Field - ShaunteClair
- Wednesday Feb 23
Private Party with The Volcanics and Cell Block 5
- Thursday Feb 24
Headlight View - Mona - For Now - Payaso
- Friday Feb 25
I.D.M. - Unfinished Business - Just Us - Beer Thieves of America
- Saturday Feb 26
The Nip Drivers - No Fraud - Anti Social - The Misfortunes
- Sunday Feb 27
DJ Art spinning the best 50's tunes! w special guests
Rockets of Love - Elvis Wesley and the Pistol Whippers
Knuckledraggers - Pschobilly band! - Final Solution
- Tuesday Mar 1
Slight tear in the fabric of a spacetime - Dangerous minds
Kidomonet - Remon Soto
- Wednesday Mar 2
Viva Malpeche - GFK
- Thursday Mar 3
Angry Young Men - Algesia - The Stabios - Killing Californiaas
- Friday Mar 4
LADC - ACDC Tribute Band! - Kidomonet - The Leeches
- Saturday Mar 5
China White - Famous Tea - Cell Block 5
Poop w Rick Agnew! - Useless Intent - The Stress
- Sunday Mar 6
DJ Art spinning the best 50's tunes! w special guests SURF NIGHT!!
The Infares - The Volcanics - Rockets of Love
- Monday Mar 7
METAL MONDAYS
Shamelady
- Tuesday Mar 8
The Cobras - Silence is Treason - Paralax
The Republickends
- Wednesday Mar 9
Via Malpeche
- Thursday Mar 10
Smitten - Bel and The Dragon - The Arc Welders
L-10 Project - Time Again
- Friday Mar 11
Los Creepers
- Saturday Mar 12
Punk Rock Social Night!
Dr Know! - Chickeebob - Blockage - The Sores - Cooker
- Sunday Mar 13
DJ Art spinning the best 50's tunes!
Rockets of Love - The Ill - Leave me broken
- Monday Mar 14
METAL MONDAYS
The Loaders
- Tuesday Mar 15
Bristol - Straight Down - Nation of Two
- Wednesday Mar 16
Viva Malpeche

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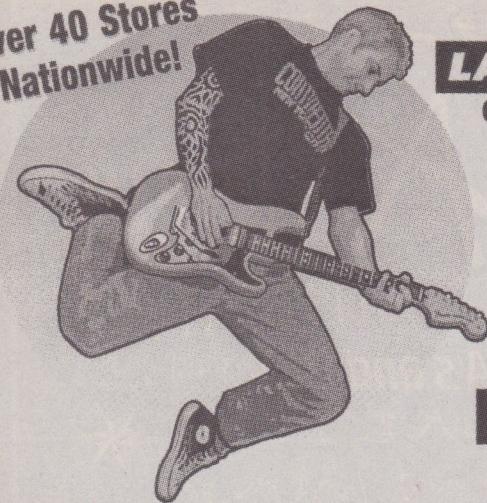
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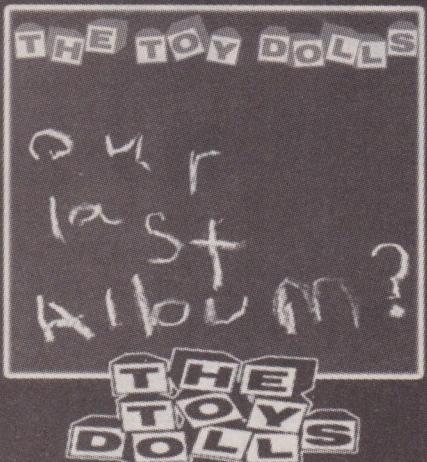
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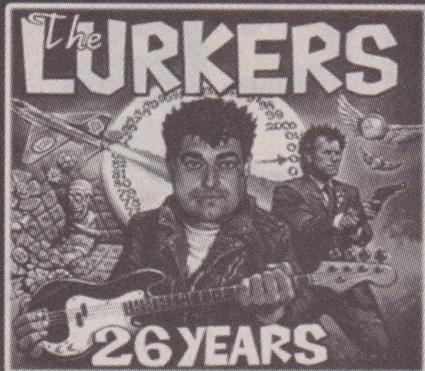


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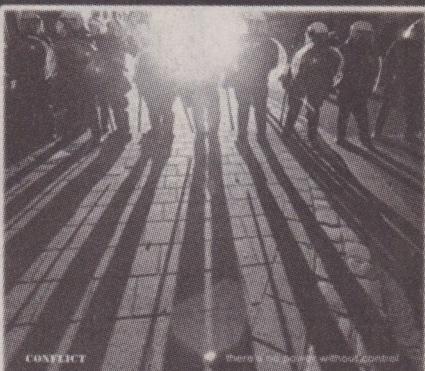


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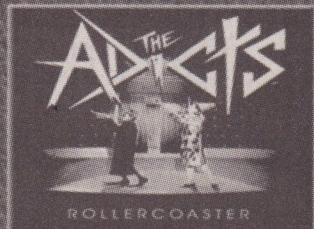
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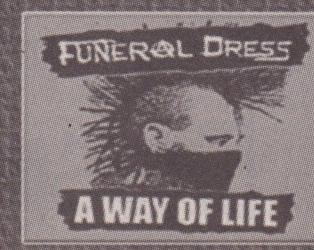
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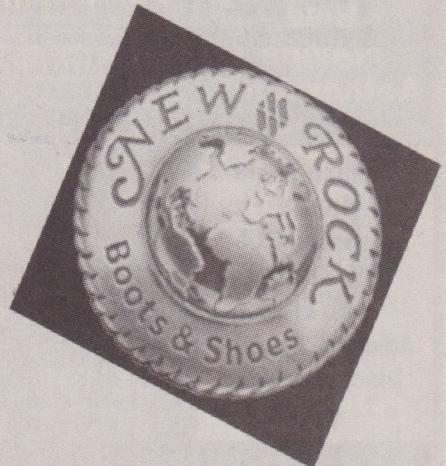
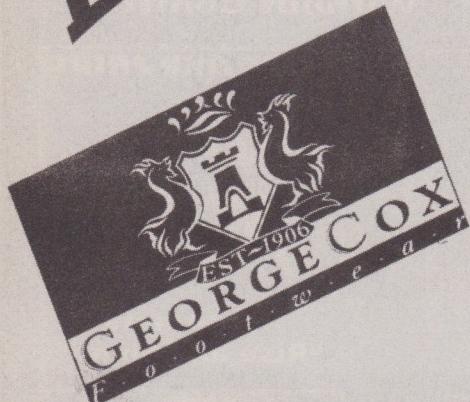
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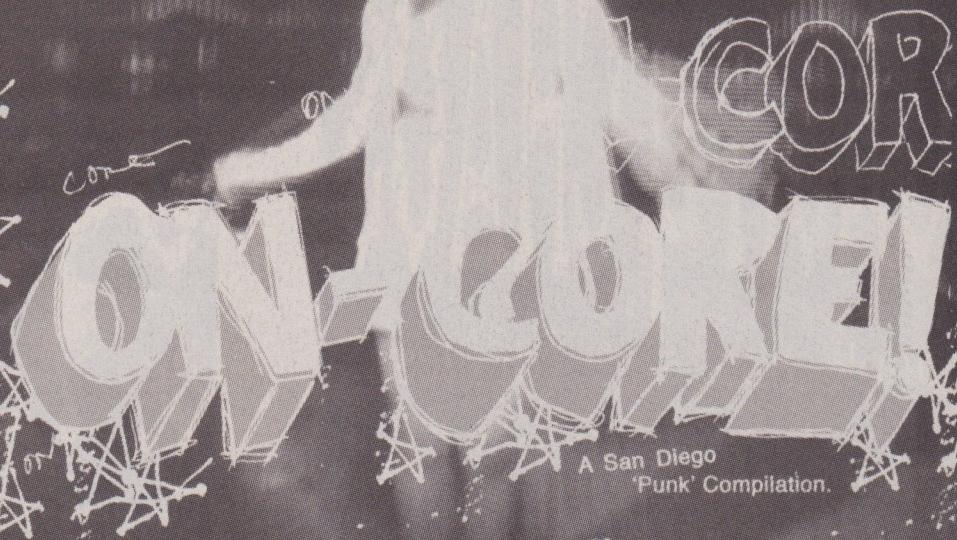
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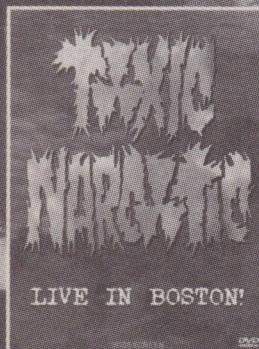
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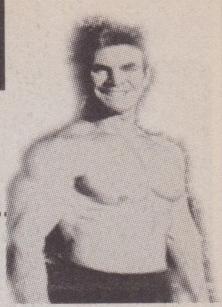
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Dude your zine kicks so much ass. Every month I go to the record store to pick up a new copy of skratch. I like how you stay true to punk roots and do great show reviews

- MATT

Matt,
You kick ass my fine-feathered friend! Glad you've noticed.

Cheers,
Scott, SKratch

18th, then Clear Chanel bought out the venue so we had to come up with 500 bucks to keep it in 1 week, we didn't, sucky!

So this big festival is coming to our hometown Bakersfield (FreakFest) and now Clear Channel once again wants to suck every bit of money from local bands and clubs by battling bands to play an event that even the losers get to play, so its just premotion for there big show (3,000 plus people BANDS DONT GET PAID) at our expence, local clubs could draw 100 plus for us on a good

that I must cross-reference my sources when dealing with new information. I apologize to the members of Tiger Army, and to all the fans that must have been SKRATCHING their heads. Tiger Army is a fine band and I enjoyed the show very much. If anyone should find error with my work in the future, please let me know so I can continue to do my best to improve. Remember though, facts are facts, and opinions are opinions. I cannot be held responsible if the music you enjoy is crap.

-marcus Solomon

favorite quote from our crapbox:

"...Also you claim to be a punk magazine. Oh those misspellings will surely add to your punk rock cred!"

Dear Scott fucker,
Next time you criticize a fan sending YOU mail...why don't you take a little time out and edit your staff writers articles. I found numerous misspellings and typos, including the spelling of "Roger Miret" as "Roget." That's the only one I am going to bring up, but honestly take your own advice and use spell check. You claim to be an editor? What do you edit? Your own shit probably. Also you claim to be a punk magazine. Oh those misspellings will surely add to your punk rock cred! Your magazine is truly a disappointment.

ROCK.
Sue

Sue,
That is a great name for me - Scott fucker. Luuuuuuuuv it! We have a proofreader and sometimes even he makes mistakes. Will you call him and fire him for me, Sue? He doesn't read the letters section, so let me just say - he's a great guy but doesn't do well with band names. He smells too. Punk rock cred: 20 points. Thank you! You seem nice as Punch, send a resume! Try a comma after the word Also (by the way)!

Keep reading and keep bitchin',
Scott, Skratch

hey skratch,
I think we (Karmahitlist) just sold our soul to the devil twice! I had a solid venue at SXSW on march

summer weekend, 50/50 at the door. Thats how we live.

those battles are going to have \$8.00 and theyll promo the hell out of it. Anyways we keep getting the shaft, battleing music is lame if theres no prize, whats it for? Anyways I was gonna ask you to review our music @ www.purevolume.com/karmahitlist, www.myspace.com/karmahitlist but I decided to vent instead...this message will self destruct...

seantastic out

Hello Skratch -
First I'd like to say I really enjoy your magazine. Second...I can tell Marcus Solomon isn't really a Tiger Army fan from his article on issue 107. He doesn't know the current members from the old ones and got the names all screwed up. I can't believe he thought that was Geoff and Fred playing up on stage. As for the new members, you can't compare anyone to Geoff Kresge and Fred Hell. In my opinion, they made Tiger Army sound the way they do and they put on a great fuckin show. So, let Marcus know that next time he goes to a show or writes an article to...GET THE FACTS STRAIGHT. Thanks.

Al
El Monte, CA.

Response to Al from writer, Marcus:
Thank you for bringing the errors to my attention. I must admit that I obtained the band member's names from the Internet, and now I realize

Yuri pouser, I am D-Cup's mom. I read your attempt of a gig review featuring my boy's some other fake acts and the Dickies.

Just wanted to say turn up your hearing aid or least your mind. My son's don't sing about "Clock Radios" it's fucking POP RADIO which you seem to have a great interest and familiarity with. Also The song with suicide in the title is called ROCK N ROLL SUICIDE and it is about the death of punk rock and any other cool underground musical sounds or movements because of ignorant self important human beings that don't understand why it's important to stay real or what the gift of life is really about.

- Mama Cup

H. Barry Zimmerman and staff:
This letter is from Achilles' manager. We are extremely disappointed with the review you have given the CD and of the band. You tone is unacceptable and the comments are crude. We appreciate your honesty, but would like for the article to be taken off of the site. Please contact regarding this issue.

- Marc

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DREW'S DO'S AND DON'TS OF VALENTINE'S DAY ETIQUETTE

By Drew Baker

Amidst a lovely season of global politics and ecological disasters, there is always time for love. Yes, that's right. Hallmark's seemingly copyrighted holiday, Valentine's Day, is right around the bend. Unavoidable to the single and attached alike, love will definitely consume the air. So grab a gas mask, your best dining jacket, and prepare yourself for a rip-roaring ride through a crash course on how to make your Valentine's Day extra special.

No matter what you're doing for the occasion, your date will most likely expect you to "beautify" yourself. Depending on your plans, requirements will change. Some places you can get away with t-shirts and shorts. Other places will have you hung for such offenses. Regardless, plan to kick your usual style up a notch. While people will notice the change, you can be proud to know that you're still doing the bare minimum.

To me nothing says comfort like a good pair of doughboy slippers, but this case, they might not be so appropriate. What should you wear? Try to not wear the pair of tennis shoes that has the most holes. Tennis shoes are fine so long as they are still eighty percent intact, at least. If I can't see your toe, all is copasetic. I think that's an acceptable boundary. Keep your talon-like toenails and athletes' foot to yourself. No one wants to smell your feet, especially during dinner. And rethink sandals...you dirty hippy.

Now, should the plan for the evening include a restaurant, make damn sure you have reservations prior to the day of. Worse case scenario, come up with a small list of possible alternatives. No one wants to be that jackass overdressed, alone, and eating at McDonald's. Fortunately for you, double cheeseburgers are only a buck, so you can escape cheap, should you find yourself in that situation.

Perhaps you're ultra-creative and want to flex your culinary skills. This is a nice sentimental idea. However, pay attention to your date's dietary needs, if applicable. If she's a vegetarian, don't serve a filet mignon wrapped in bacon. If she's allergic to shellfish, don't make seafood pasta. If you want to be bold, try giving your date a choice of what to make...a menu of sorts. But, remember, grilled cheese shouldn't be an option. Mmmmm...grilled cheese.

Dining is obviously a key part of the standard Valentine's date. While obtaining the location is an essential aspect, manners during dinner are equally as important. Normally, you might be prone to devouring your food as if it were your first meal in a year. This time, just relax. Your food isn't going anywhere. You're not going to be forced to hunt for your next meal. You won't need

to steal your knife and fork and tie them to a stick to fashion some sort of throwing spear. You just won't. Calm down. Savor your food.

Chewing with your mouth closed is an astoundingly simple yet commonly forgotten rule. I'm pretty sure your date is tickled pink you are enjoying your food, but not as happy that you're trying to make him/her enjoy it with you. And for God's sake, don't attempt to converse while you're trying to ingest your latest bite. Conversations sound terrible when they are muffled by pepperoni.

Should you and your date choose to exchange Valentine's Day gifts, I give you the same advice I believe applies to all gift-giving holidays: make your gifts relevant. What the fuck am I going to do with a teddy bear? I mean, really? One year, for Christmas, an ex-girlfriend gave me a beard trimmer. Really fucking creative. If there were a prize for gift giving, this surely would have won. Not only was it a faulty mechanical nightmare, the mere point of the gift was insulting. She might as well have said, "Here you go, you yeti bastard." So yeah, make your gifts fun.

Aside from dinner, you must also consider the rest of the evening's activities. This gets a bit trickier. In order to not be cliché, avoid the movies and a walk on the beach. You wind up spending Valentine's Day with two hundred strangers in a dark room or you get naked on the shore and have sand in your crack for the next year and a half. Also, try to stay away from the "slamming the hotel room key on the dinner table" move, unless, of course, you guys are into that sort of thing...in which case, more power to you.

There are always things to do. It is just a matter of finding them. Bowling is great. Mini-golf complexes are a party too, but they do have a creepy, KARATE KID feel to them. Hey, if you're twenty-one or older, you can always hit up jazz clubs or bars. What better way to say "I love you" by getting hammered. Happy Valentine's Day! Two shots of Jager and a scotch please. Oh yeah...and whatever she wants.

Most importantly, know where you're going and what you're doing. For example, make sure the house party you're going to is legit. Call it a hunch, but you might not want to show up with your date to an orgy. Or do you? I don't know. I'd say probably not.

As a final note, may I suggest never incorporating other people into your Valentine's plans. Sometimes a good Valentine's party is much needed, but it can lead to weird situations. Randomly, you might find yourself and your crazy ex-tweaker date frying on mescaline with your friend, who was, at the time, mentally imbalanced. I'm not sure how it happened, but not recommended.

Overall, it's not terribly hard to put together a memorable night for a reasonably low cost. For one day out of the year, stop being lazy, get out, and do something. Your date will feel good about it. You'll feel good about it. Commercial America will feel good about it. There will be smiles all around. But, of course...tomorrow, you'll be a wife-beating bastard. Thankfully, redemption can be yours next Valentine's Day. Kisses.

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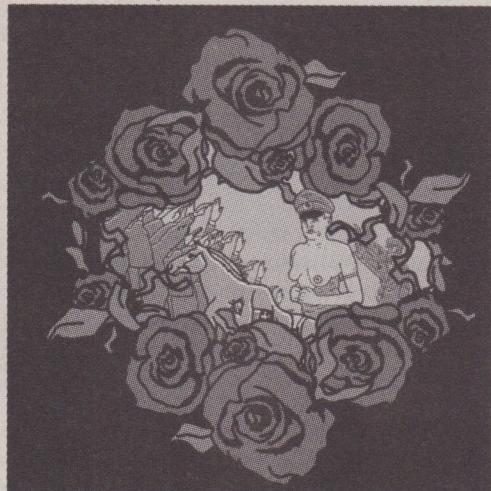
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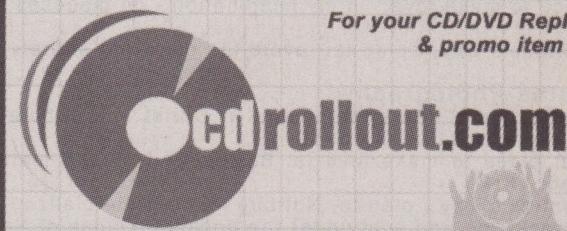
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LOVE THIS SURVEY

Melissa Wong/ Writer

I'd love to: Be rich, have a cute bulldog named Rex, and get a half sleeve on my left arm, oh yeah, and marry Jack Black
The Best place to make love is: somewhere tropical...with palm trees, sand, and Coronas. Mmm..or even some Diet coke with lime will do...

For Valentine's Day I plan to: work because I am a maniac and because I'm in Vegas for a week with my office, but it's a free trip, and I'm getting paid! :D

Todd Markel, KOCE-TV/Skratch Photographer-writer

I'd love to: Teach the World to sing in perfect harmony.

The Best place to make love is: A big fluffy four-poster bed.

For Valentine's Day I plan to: Give my wife a nice card and go out to dinner

Annette Ovanessian, writer/photographer Skratch Magazine, Jointz Magazine, www.undergroundup.com

I'd love to: Win the lottery! Then, quit school, quit my job, sleep in, shop, watch TV....and, and, and....

The Best place to make love is: On a KING size bed, on a Queen size bed, and on a Twin size bed.

For Valentine's Day I plan to: Still wait for my Prince Charming to enter my life. Oh, and go to work...I'm on the schedule.

David Walter / contributing writer

I'd love to: see the Eagles win the Super Bowl

The Best place to make love is: as many states as possible

For Valentine's Day I plan to: eat chocolate naked

Erin Tate, drummer of Minus the Bear

I'd love to: have 50 million dollars or 50.million beers.

The Best place to make love is: rock club bathrooms (wait that's gross) my bed....

For Valentine's Day I plan to: take some ecstasy and eat a nice steak dinner.

Paul Layton of Layton

I'd love to: fall in love with myself all over again

Best place to make love: in my imagination - no diseases, less babies

For Valentine's Day, I plan to: avoid the color red entirely

Maranatha Photography

I'd love to: Learn true contentment in Christ and satisfaction through His love. (1 John 4:9-10)

The Best place to make love is: Before God, in the marriage bed. (Heb. 13:4)

For Valentine's Day I plan to: Not buy into commercialized sensuality, packaged and sold under the deceptive cloak of "love".

Brian Spiegel/Journalist Love Machine

I'd love to: Graduate from college sometime in the next millennium.

The Best place to make love is: Couch at Skratch Magazine headquarters (sorry about the mess guys, please bill me for full cleaning).

For Valentine's Day I plan to: Wear green and celebrate 'the Independence of Mexico... wait, which holiday is Valentine's Day again?

Joey LaRocca, Vocals

I'd love to: go on a trip to Jamaica

The Best place to make love is: in the butt...I mean in a car.

For Valentine's Day I plan to: Go to dinner with my wife and perhaps a movie.

Marcus Solomon / writer, tutor, idiot

I'd love to: End the war, feed the children, find a panacea, and get some new porn.

The Best place to make love is: All over Ryna

For Valentine's Day I plan to: Work a long, satisfying day, then spend a long satisfying night with Ryna.

xKATlx/photographer/iamthebombdotcom.

I'd love to: get the Betty Crocker baking tin so I can make dank vegan ice cream cakes yo.

The Best place to make love is: how many ways can I write... v-card still intact?! Thanks for reminding me.

The Jeff Penalty, new lead singer for Dead Kennedys
I'd love to: live in a world where chimps roam free and Jessica and Ashlee Simpson are subjected to experimental medical treatments.

The best place to make love is: on top of Strom Thurmond's grave.

For Valentine's Day I plan to: poo in my hands and wipe it on all the doorknobs at Hallmark headquarters.

Carley/ "Cancun"

I'd love to: Have a car again

The Best place to make love is: In a playground on the side of the road in Boston

For Valentine's Day I plan to: Rub on my roommate's fanny

Mark A. Whitaker/Skratch Photographer/writer

I'd love to: learn how to do front side 5-0 grinds

The Best place to make love is: Compton

For Valentine's Day I plan to: probably work, or something

Mike Tubbs - Singer/Guitar Player of East West

I'd love to: Take my wife out for a nice weekend get-away (Cambria, CA)

The Best place to make love is: Anywhere!

For Valentine's Day I plan to: Hmm... guess that's for me to know, and you to... well.. not know. ;)

Sir Stephen Christian of Anberlin

I'd love to: be able to afford something nice for my girlfriend, instead of the typical band guy gift of a handshake and a backstage pass

The Best place to make love is: anywhere! It's making love isn't it???

For Valentine's Day I plan to: be driving in a big white van with 6 other lonely men...hmmm maybe not so bad after all. (joke!)

Marcia Taylor, oldest living Skratch writer

I'd love to: See everyone I care about happy & healthy.

The Best place to make love is: Wherever you are when the mood strikes you.

For Valentine's Day I plan to: send valentines to the two guys I like most in the world.

Timmy Hansell (Digital/New Media) Vagrant Records

I'd love to: Drink a glass of Sailor Jerry Rum and Diet Pepsi.

The Best place to make love is: You wish you knew.

For Valentine's Day I plan to: Drink krunk juice all day and night.

Rory Christopher Felton / cmfic

I'd love to: be an Iraqi for a day, see what it's really like

The Best place to make love is: somewhere comfortable

For Valentine's Day I plan to: probably just chill

Roy Culver / A&R

I'd love to: Be in bed right now.

The Best place to make love is: Any place with stain resistant carpet and sheets.

For Valentine's Day I plan to: Get slapped around by someone hotter than me.

Jonny, Vocalist, The Break

I'd love to: Have dinner with Bill Murray.

The Best place to make love is: The bathroom floor!

For Valentine's Day I plan to: Be on tour with five other filthy guys, Yay!

Single Frame

I'd love to: retire

The Best place to make love is: the ear

For Valentine's Day I plan to: Call for a 7:30 reservation at the best restaurant in town 30 minutes beforehand / throw a fit

Kevin Tunney of The Break

I'd love to: hang out with bill Murray

The Best place to make love is: an incinerator

For Valentine's Day I plan to: play a show about 3000 miles from home.

Shea Childs/Negative PR

I'd love to: go rock climbing or just plain rockin'
 The Best place to make love is: anywhere
 For Valentine's Day I plan to: Wine and Dine my beloved, get drunk and get it on.

Seth Brown - Guy who runs Status Magazine & Status Recordings

I'd love to: Wake up, go surfing all day. And Yes I know it's Valentines Day.
 The Best place to make love is: On the beach...or so I'm told.
 For Valentine's Day I plan to: Go surfing since I'm single and you know, the ocean rules.

Zach from Mourning September, bass

I'd love to: freakin' get married
 The Best place to make love is: anywhere with the gal I'm gonna marry
 For Valentine's Day I plan to: play chess or watch a movie...without my wife

Mike Byrne/Guitar of the Methadones

I'd love to: Get acting lessons from Carl Weathers
 The Best place to make love is: Zak Einstein's 4 Door Honda Civic
 For Valentine's Day I plan to look for a wig for my friend Zak Einstein at a new store called "Hair Today, Gone Tomorrow".

Beau Kuther, Drums of Kaddisfly

I'd love to: Have \$20 in my wallet so I could take Ashlee Simpson on a date.
 The Best place to make love is: In Ryan Cabrera's (sp?) bathroom with Ashlee Simpson
 For Valentine's Day I plan to: Masturbate in the back of the van, followed by playing a show and drinking myself to sleep.

Scott DeSimon, bass player, Touring Machine

I'd love to: be able to take a nap daily after lunch. not a "nap". Just a nap.
 The Best place to make love is: I confine my sweet but vigorous lovemaking to internet cafes, the laundromats of the 21st century.
 For Valentine's Day I plan to: Melt down all the chocolate I receive and take a mud bath with it in a large double boiler.

Steve the Cougar, Nerf Herder drums

I'd love to: Put a TV in my bathroom
 The Best place to make love is: On the toilet
 For Valentine's Day I plan to: Eat prunes and watch TV

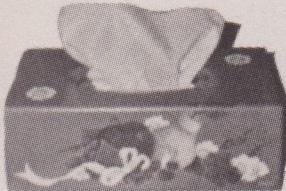
Jason, bass and vocals for The Havoc

I'd love to: Go to Hawaii for my honeymoon
 The Best place to make love is: Heart shaped jacuzzi on my honeymoon
 For Valentine's Day I plan to: work, see my fiancé, have band practice.

Justin Pearson aka jp...title: shit head of the locust, some girls, three one g co-owner
 I'd love to: answer more vague questions that are non-inspiring.
 The Best place to make love is: "make love"? or screw? Either way, in my temperpedic bed
 For Valentine's Day I plan to: fuck off

Brett Bowden of Yellow Second

I'd love to: be married to Jessica Simpson
 The Best place to make love is: in a factory
 For Valentine's Day I plan to: dress as cupid and shoot people with a bow and arrow



**"For Valentine's Day I plan to:
 Masturbate in the back of the van, followed by playing a show and drinking myself to sleep"**

Rachel Flotard, Visqueen singist and guitarer
 I'd love to: Hover over Ben (drummer) like I'm going to pull his mole off.
 The Best place to make love is: Through a hole in an Osmond sheet.
 For Valentine's Day I plan to: Braid my hair like Bjork's wig visor on Medulla and scare myself shitless. For love.

Genghis Tron

We'd love to: go deep.
 The Best place to make love is: in a clean bed with someone who we have genuine affection for.
 For Valentine's Day we plan to: contract curable STD's

Ross Siegel- President

I'd love to: Not have to spend the prices nice New York City restaurants charge to take my girlfriend out.
 The Best place to make love is: In central park at night.
 For Valentine's Day I plan to: Spend too much money on a meal I'll eat in three bites.

Willy Graves/ plot bass

I'd love to: answer real questions
 The Best place to "make love"(who says that) is: the back of my van
 For Valentine's Day I plan to: (see above)

Allyssia Edwards co-owner 31g

I'd love to: move to Spain
 The Best place to make love is: on a busy street
 For Valentine's Day I plan to: hang out w/ my dog gee gee, my true valentine.

Jay Warner / Co-Owner of Common Cloud Records

I'd love to: have a giant, sweaty 80's dance party with all of my single and fettered friends on Valentine's Day.
 The Best place to make love is: between the sheets.
 For Valentine's Day I plan to: go to a nearby truck stop with all my other friends in the "Lonely Hearts Club", eat burgers and fries and spend all my money on arcade games.

Juan Pollo

I'd love to: Juan Pollo
 The Best place to make love is: Juan Pollo
 For Valentine's Day I plan to: eat Juan Pollo. Chicken is gross.

Jay Fidd, Captain

I'd love to: Eat Lunch now!
 The Best place to make love is: Starbucks
 For Valentine's Day I plan to: Listen to The Game "The Documentary" with my lover.

Jeremy / CEO New School Records!

I'd love to: Meet a chick that isn't dumb and has herself figured out!
 The Best place to make love is: In the backseat of a Jeep Wrangler!
 For Valentine's Day I plan to: Sit at home in my room feeling sorry for myself. Kidding! I'm not emo!

Phil Devill - Lead Guitar - Cheap Sex

I'd love to: Learn how to dance like Napoleon Dynamite.
 The Best place to make love is: On your parents to show them how much

Brian Hill, world-class tubthumper

I'd love to: find a box of money.
 The Best place to make love is: in a rectory with a priest.
 For Valentine's Day I plan to: go to confession and hit on the priest.

Ryan Allen/ guitar & vocals in thunderbirds are now!

I'd love to: swim in a pool of money
 The Best place to make love is: in a pool of money
 For Valentine's Day I plan to: construct a pool of money and make love in it

Corey Warning, lead singer/guitarist for Best of Winter

I'd love to: Make out with the world
 The Best place to make love is: In the van. It's got lots of room, mobile, and rocks with the rhythm.
 For Valentine's Day I plan to: Rock the van of course!

Nicholas Ziemann- Vocals/Guitar in Number One Fan
I'd love to: Take a vacation to Europe
The Best place to make love is: I'm going to have to say....Jacuzzi
For Valentine's Day I plan to: I leave on tour the day before, how romantic!

David Wagenschutz / Drummer PIB/GR/NMB
I'd love to: Have so much money I could wrap presents with benjamin's!
The Best place to make love is: Anywhere with the lights on!
For Valentine's Day I plan to: Be recovering from playing a weekend with Strike Anywhere and The Loved Ones!

Beano (bassist of Blood or Whiskey)
I'd love to: Be able to think of a smart alec answer to this question but I'm running out the door to the
The Best place to make love is: in my girlfriend
For Valentine's Day I plan to: do nothing & have the attention lavished on me!

Kevin Burwick / Guitar / Arkham (Volcom Entertainment)
I'd love to: Go on tour with Incubus just to shave the singer's chest every night.
The Best place to make love is: In the Van while using Skratch magazine as the sheets.
For Valentine's Day I plan to: Wear some mascara and cry. That way I look super cool on a date.

Heather Smith / Publicity Century Media
I'd love to: Curl up and watch a movie with my kitty and someone special
The Best place to make love is: There isn't a bad place, is there?
For Valentine's Day I plan to: discuss with my girlfriends the fallacy of ever finding 'Mr. Right'.

Sean McGrath/ Super Genius
I'd love to: Give you a backrub.
The Best place to make love is: In the butt.
For Valentine's Day I plan to: Kill myself.

Chris Broderick
I'd love to: Kick it down under
The Best place to make love is: where isn't the best place to make love?
For Valentine's Day I plan to: get in trouble with my girl friend (ahahaha just kidding!).

Mardo
I'd love to: get rid of my "Love Hangover."
The Best place to make love is: cruising at 30,000 feet in the lavatory of a 767.
For Valentine's Day I plan to: catch a flight somewhere...Anywhere! Just as long as it's a 767.

Garrett Range – Bass for The Letters Organize
I'd love to: not be here....well. Atlanta. I wish I was on tour or in some strange town with all my friends.
The Best place to make love is: an elevators, of course.
For Valentine's Day I plan to: drink for a week in Portland.

Nick Martin, Underminded lead singer/guitarist
I'd love to: party with my girlfriend
The Best place to make love is: anywhere where people in the same room are sleeping.
For Valentine's Day I plan to: jerk off because I won't be home.

Joe Mullen, Underminded drummer
I'd love to: go to Japan
The Best place to make love is: Japan

Matty O'Connell/Underminded Bassist
I'd love to: see my girlfriend
The Best place to make love is: the shower
For Valentine's Day I plan to: be on a plane home for a few days off.

Aaron / Owner, decoymusic.com
I'd love to: tour with Underminded
The Best place to make love is: my grandmas house
For Valentine's Day I plan to: fly home from Europe and fantasize about this hot girl I just met

Matt Johnson, Underminded guitarist
I'd love to: be home for v day
The Best place to make love is: my moms house
For Valentine's Day I plan to: fly to Minnesota to be reunited with my van.

Bob Massey / The Gena Rowlands Band
I'd love to: remind you that St. Valentine got his head chopped off for marrying people. Mom, have some chocolate.
The Best place to make love is: the steps of the U.S. Capitol, as proven by Congressman John Jenrette, busted along with his Playboy centerfold wife, Rita, in the '80s.
For Valentine's Day I plan to: stay the hell away from the Capitol, that's for sure.

James Barnum - Manager; As Night Falls, Underminded
I'd love to: Retire
The Best place to make love is: I don't make love - I fuck, in her room after her parent's tuck her into bed.
For Valentine's Day I plan to: Work

Steve Ludwig/vocalist of As Night Falls
I'd love to: play cupid for a day and shoot everyone with arrows.
The Best place to make love is: The back seat of my dad's Benz...oh yeah.
For Valentine's Day I plan to: Frolic naked all day long.

Todd Hennig/ Death By Stereo (Drums)
I'd love to: Tour for the next 2 years straight, then buy a house.
The Best place to make love is: Anywhere and everywhere the mood strikes you. I don't believe in holding back.
For Valentine's Day I plan to: Hang out with my lady: Get some good Vegan food, then hit the love chamber.

Jon, from The Matches, Devoto, Guitar, vox
I'd love to: Have a super hot valentine. I probably won't.
The Best place to make love is: The mouth, of course.
For Valentine's Day I plan to: Probably playing a show somewhere.

Mezklah
I'd love to: have an underwater dance party with all the broken-hearted mermaids
The Best place to make love is: in the early morning kitchen with the oven on
For Valentine's Day I plan to: ride a train in a faraway country with my true lover bouncing on my knee.

Carl Bouchard, guitarist in A perfect Murder
I'd love to: do a threesome
The Best place to make love is: In a pool
For Valentine's Day I plan to: Being poor, once again.

Tito / Guitarist of Death by Stereo
I'd love to: Teach the world to sing in perfect harmony.
The Best place to make love is: Vaginas
For Valentine's Day I plan to: Drink up a Storm.

Laura Cataldo - Guitarist for The Randies(aka The Drunken Randies Good Will Ambassador)
I'd love to: Drink till I vomit red hearts on Valentines Day
The Best place to make love is: Pirates Of The Caribbean ride at Disneyland

Scott, Skratch - Jerkoff, trickster
I'd love to: not move this mouse around anymore.
The Best place to make love is: in my bed.
For Valentine's Day I plan to: make sweet love wth my Poopachoo.

"For Valentine's Day I plan to: Wear some mascara and cry. That way I look super cool on a date."

Marko 72 (Sugarcult guitarist/Bad Astronaut bassist)

I'd love to: live in a hate-free society.

The Best place to make love is: hotels with 2 beds, one for fucking and one for sleeping!

For Valentine's Day I plan to: Be drunk in Dallas (on tour) on the phone to California hoping my band members don't catch me baby-talkin'.

Efrem, Death by Stereo

I'd love to: Not vomit or get someone else's vomit on me anymore.

The Best place to make love is: I'm into havin' sex, I ain't in to makin' love.

For Valentine's Day I plan to: Vomit or possibly get someone else's vomit on me.

Christian Zak/ bass player As Night Falls

I'd love to: hopefully make a name for myself some day

The Best place to make love is: wrong guy to ask that question to considering I still got "V" power

For Valentine's Day I plan to: umm..Your guess is as good as mine

Ace (guitar - Madcap/The Generators)

I'd love to: Have a house of my own for Valentines Day!

The Best place to make love is: In a vagina. Oh, I get it... Anywhere will suffice.

For Valentine's Day I plan to: Get trashed with my girl and destroy a hotel room in true rock star form.

Andrew Jordan, Matchbook Romance

I'd love to actually have a Valentine this year.

Brian, guitar for Break The Silence

I'd love to: meet and hang out with William Peterson of CSI Las Vegas!!!

The Best place to make love is: on the kitchen floor with a jug of honey at hand.

For Valentine's Day I plan to: Drink! My work closes for 4 days for remodeling...Party time.

Hunter Weeks from Love is Red

I'd love to: have 50 Cent to do guest vocals on our next record

The Best place to make love is: LAS VEGAS!!!

For Valentine's Day I plan to: make love to a European girl on tour

Cameron Hawk, guitar/vocals in Dead Girls Ruin Everything

I'd love to: Take you home.

The Best place to make love is: Any place you haven't.

For Valentine's Day I plan to: Get a little crazy with my girls and eat my weight in promise hearts.

Michael Sileno, drummer for Alli With An I

I'd love to: Drink a beer with John Brown

The Best place to make love is: In a car, a small one

For Valentine's Day I plan to: Loathe the fact that this day exists, but not act like that to my girlfriend, even though she knows I'm not fond of this Hallmark holiday.

Mike Milford / Scars of Tomorrow

I'd love to: get pimp my ride to make our van sweet!

The Best place to make love is: inside the fort I made in my bedroom

For Valentine's Day I plan to: cuddle up next to our merch guy Dougie fresh cuz im gonna be gone from home .=)

Jupiter Sunrise

I'd love to: not get hit in the nards with a baseball, not get kicked in the nards by a kickboxer, and not have my nards unravel when my surfboard busts one of them open, like on past Valentine's days.

The Best place to make love is: the ionosphere...low orbit space flight gets us hot...62 mile high club in da house.

Chris, drums, Last Perfection.

I'd love to: be totally free for the woman i love.

The Best place to make love is: any dark room with a candle

For Valentine's Day I plan to: take my wife on a night in the city

Sue Lopez/Skratch Slave

I'd love to: find an apartment for me and my dog, Vanilla

Best place to make love: is on a bed with silk sheets

For Valentine's Day, I plan to: go out for beers :)

Nathan Lilley; vocals & guitar in Call Me Lightning

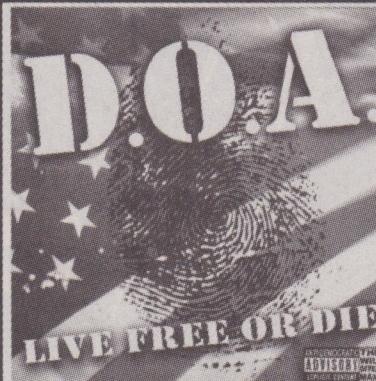
I'd love to: eat a pyramid of cheeseburgers

The Best place to make love is: McDonald's

For Valentine's Day I plan to: eat a pyramid of cheeseburgers and fuck someone at McDonald's.

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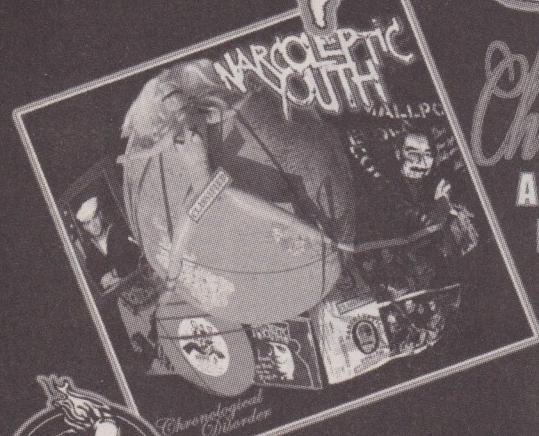
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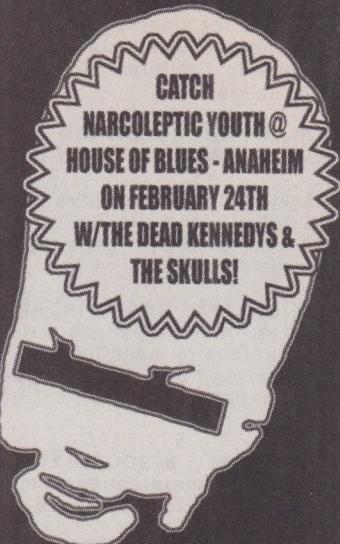


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VAGRANT GETS BLOODY

The Bled have signed to Vagrant Records. Expect a new CD this summer. Also, recently signed to Vagrant are The Eels.

LOOSE ONE

Hey Mercedes of Vagrant Records has thrown in the towel, and will release their final CD in April/May.

FROM DC TO RBK

Jackson Curtin has left the DC skate team to join up with friends on the RBK team.

GET OVER IT

Lobster Records band, Over It, will release their new CD, SILVERSTRAND, March 8.

BEFORE THE TRAILER GOES

Michigan-based band, Before I Go, had their trailer stolen with most of their gear inside.

RAISING HELL IN SPAIN

Hellrose skaters DJ Chavez and Paul Otvos will be spending this and next month touring Spain.

SEXUALLY FRUSTRATED

In Milan, a man robbed a sex store, taking \$100 from the clerk, an inflatable sex doll, and female leather bondage gear.

ENDICOTT SEARCH

New York band, Endicott, recently lost their guitarist, Don Naylor, and is looking for a replacement.

NEW STARS ON MOON

Stars Turn Cold are currently recording their upcoming EP to be released on Emerald Moon Records

BROCKMAN GETS MADA

Mada Clothing has decided to sponsor skateboarder James Brockman.

NOT SUCH A HAPPY MEAL

A San Diego man was sleeping in a parking space at a McDonalds when he was run over and seriously injured.

MARTYR SPLITS

Martyr Records has released the first few in their split

series, which are With drummer Jeff Carter. Honor/The Distance and Diary of a Corpse/Casey Jones.

UNITED EDGE TAKES HOSTAGE

The Hostage Heart has been signed by United Edge Records and will hit the recording studio this summer.

SKATING WITH RAGDOLL

Anthony Scalamere (aka Ragdoll) has joined up with Ambiguous' pro skate team.

SCHOOL VS. MUSIC

Zao bassist, Sean Koschick, is reportedly leaving the band to continue his education.

NO MORE 9/11

A man was tackled and tied up with duct tape by fellow passengers when he tried to enter the cockpit of Southwest Airlines plane during its flight.

MOVING TO SPOOK CITY

Metal/hardcore band, Lahar, has signed to Spook City Records, and is in the studio recording right now.

MERGING WITH TRAFFIC

Rider Anthony Correa has joined up with the Traffic skate team.

PARIS, GEORGIA

Trustkill Records adds Fight Paris, who is based out of Atlanta, Georgia, to their roster. The band plans to release their debut Trustkill album this summer.

ENEMIES, LIFE, OPPPOSITION TOUR

Alove For Enemies, Life In Your Way, and Opposition of One head out for their U.S. tour next month.

REBUILDING BROOKLYN BRIDGE

Skateboarders rallied together and got the city to alter redevelopment plans in order to save most of the area known as Brooklyn Bridge Banks for skatepark use.

SWITCHING OUT THE CHARIOT

Mark Nicks and Brian Khounvichit have joined The Chariot to replace guitarist Tony "Taco" Medina and

With drummer Jeff Carter.

THE BREATHING DEAD

A 29-year-old man, declared dead two hours earlier, was found breathing by a medical examiner in a North Carolina morgue.

PLAGUING LIFE SENTENCE

Life Sentence Records has signed SoCal band, Winds of Plague. They plan to release a full-length this summer.

TRAINWRECK GETS NEW KNEE

Trainwreck has quit Young Guns Skateboarding and underwent full knee reconstructive surgery last month.

SKINLESS BROTHERS

Skinless vocalist Sherwood Webber's vacated position has been filled by Jason Keyser, who is the brother of Skinless bassist Joe Keyser.

CIRCLE JERKING THE KUNG FU SERIES

The Circle Jerks have been added as one of the latest additions to the Kung Fu live show DVD series, THE SHOW MUST GO OFF!!

HOW MUCH DOES LOVE COST?

A man took out a \$17,000 full-page ad in THE FLORIDA TIMES-UNION, begging for his estranged wife's forgiveness.

WARPED SMARTPUNK LINEUP

Smartpunk has announced Armor For Sleep, Zao, Midtown, Gatsby's American Dream, A Thorn For Every Heart, Emery, Hopesfall, Boys Night Out, Yesterday's Rising, and Greeley Estates for their stage at this summer's Warped Tour.

SLEEPING WITH AN IPOD MINI

The Sleeping are offering an iPod Mini as the grand prize of their contest. Check www.believewhatwetellyou.com for the details.

NEW CITY TEAM

Street Corner Distributions has created City Skateboards with a powerful skate team.

SUBURBAN GOES MARTYR

Kentucky band, Suburban Blood Drive, has been signed by Martyr Records. They will start recording this spring.

GO PARK YOUR CAR ON THE TRACKS

A commuter train was derailed just outside of L.A., killing at least 10 passengers, when a deranged man parked his car across the tracks.

VANDALS BOYCOTT

The Vandals' Vienna, Austria show moved locations when the promoters boycotted the band for playing in Iraq over the holidays.

HORACE PINKER GOES TEXAS

Chicago four-some Horace Pinker will be releasing their fourth full-length, TEXAS ONE TEN, on Thick Records this spring.

PHILLY PARK

Philadelphia is in the midst of planning for their first skateboard park.

DREAMING OF VOLCANOES

Gatsby's American Dream recently finished recording their album, VOLCANO, which is set for release in April.

DRUNKEN BANK ROBBING

Using only a beer bottle as a weapon, a man robbed a bank and stole a car in Georgia.

DESPISTADO DEPARTS

Despistado is no longer, but their recently recorded full-length, THE PEOPLE OF AND THEIR VERSES, will still be digitally released April 5 on Jade Tree Records.

ROCK KILLS KID COMES BACK TO LIFE

Fearless Records band, Rock Kills Kid, will release their first full-length, BACK TO LIFE, this May.

TSUNAMI RELIEF SIMS STYLE

Sessions CEO, Joel Gomez, has donated a 1982 Christian Hosoi Sims skateboard deck to be auctioned to provide aid to tsunami victims.

The Undecided Comp

Undecided Records has released THE OLD, THE NEW, THE UNRELEASED, a compilation CD that showcases new bands and unreleased material.

read more news@
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Exmortem

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Usurper
Narcoleptic Youth
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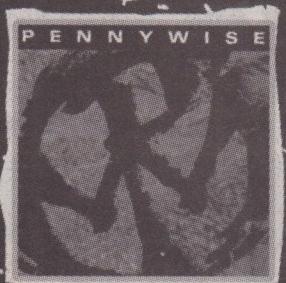
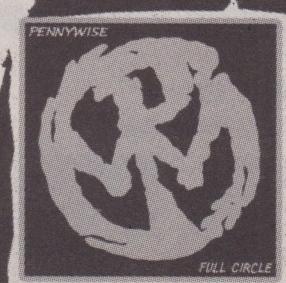
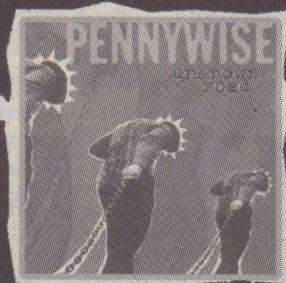
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The Haunted
By Mike SOS
Photos by Ollie Carlsson

One of the most prolific metal bands from Sweden have welcomed a familiar face back to its fold — Peter Dolving. Vocalist Peter Dolving's return to The Haunted is commemorated with the sonically brutal REVOLVER. The recently released scorching 13-track Century Media venture was on many critic's Top 10 lists for 2004, and for good reason. When speaking to Dolving via email, we asked about his triumphant return, what he was doing in the interim and his take on the death of Dimebag Darrell, who The Haunted was on tour with at the time of the tragic murder. Never at a loss for words or shy on wit, Dolving opens up his heart and mind and unleashes an interesting read for metal fans worldwide.

SKRATCH: So, why did you leave the band in the first place and then return?

PETER: Well how about this: Shitty company. Shitty record deal. ADD. Manic depression. No money. Love and self-hatred, etc. But I've told that so many times now it's getting old. So now, I'm thinking maybe it's because I had to hide from the Russian mob or getting mixed by complete fluke with secret agents and a soap factory in the former republic of Czechoslovakia.

Or perhaps it had something to do with getting fugitives out of China... I don't know, which story do you prefer?

SKRATCH: What were you doing during your time away (musically, personally, etc.)?

PETER: Actually I've done loads of stuff. I've produced some indie bands. I've done guest vocals and co-written stuff with friends of mine in a sXe-band called Set My Path and crust demons Total J'rker, which means Complete Fucking Darkness. Inge, the bass player from The International Noise Conspiracy is one of their vocalists. Also I've made three full albums with my own band. Initially, we called it the Peter Dolving Band, but we've changed that to Bring The War Home (because the Weathermen were the fucking shit). Also, been part of the songwriting and recording process for an anarchist reggae-band called Gusto. We've done two albums featuring Yellowman and U Brown. And of course, there's the legal and advisory work I've gotten into through the musicians union because of my interest in the music business.

SKRATCH: Describe the recording process for REVOLVER: how long it took, the struggles endured in the studio, working with the producer and with Lou from Sick of It All.

PETER: I'll be painfully honest: we have this attitude towards recording that pretty much reflects on The Haunted as a band. It's not like this with anyone else I've worked with. We get there at eight in the morning. We leave at five in the afternoon. No one gets excited. Ever. We simply put the tracks down the way we've arranged them in the rehearsal room. No one talks more than necessary (except for me), and nothing is left to coincidence or divine inspiration. The album took 20 days to record, and about a week to mix it. How about that? Sounds about as fun as driving a nail through your hand or watching paint dry. And it is too. But the results are good so we must be doing something right. As far as Lou goes - we asked him and he liked the idea. SOIA were on tour and when they played Gothenburg he came by the studio. A few awkward hellos, mostly us feeling a bit embarrassed, then he did his vocals in about an hour and that was that. The man rocks! That's a fact.

SKRATCH: What was the easiest song to record? The toughest? The one that came out the best (in your opinion)

PETER: My favorites are "Smut King" and "Out of Reach." Coincidentally, they're not on the album except as bonus tracks in some territories. I don't think any of the songs are harder or easier. We have one standard, and it has always pretty much a challenge to what we previously achieved and learned on the way to the next record.

SKRATCH: How did your time away from the band inspire your role on REVOLVER?

PETER: I've let go any illusions of fitting into any norm. I know I'm an oddball and being away from the band has only further proved that. Pat Lachman from Damageplan told me I was the sanest insane man he's ever met, and Nicke from The Hellacopters is always going on about how I'm too much, too much. I don't know. I stay pretty much on my own. My interests are a bit quirky and VERY contradictory I guess. I'm into social issues, politics, indie rock, really twisted pornography, martial arts, and art. Pretentious as fuck, I know.

SKRATCH: When did you feel fully welcomed back into the group?

PETER: In the Haunted you never really know. That's just how this band works. Some would call us strange. Some would call us VERY strange. I guess Jensen is the most normal guy in the band, being the "rocker" of us. Surrounding himself with all these tall very "metal" beautiful women and

THE HAUNTED



playing AC/DC, King Diamond and early Scorpions on full blast in the tour bus. Me, I'll be sitting around trying to figure out if it's being unfaithful to my wife to spark the punk rock chick in the school girl outfit while drinking LOTS of coffee. But you never know if you're in or out - not in this band.

PETER: I get so much shit in the U.S. for my opinion on this. Anyway, number one, what happened was a fucking tragedy. The details you can read about elsewhere. But the tragedy is not only on

fucking die if someone points it at you and fires. If for some reason you don't die, that's sheer coincidence, and if God exists, take my word for it, he's not gonna give you a second chance.

fucking old, ok? The guy who shot Dime was a NUTCASE! I figure it's just not a good thing that any idiot or Marines dropout can just buy a gun. Does this make sense to you? I've seen

in Colorado. Now tell me, in a country where the domestic violence and crime entailing handguns are as high as they are in the USA, what is the good thing about not having gun control? Instead,

"...PERHAPS IT HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH GETTING FUGITIVES OUT OF CHINA... I DON'T KNOW, WHICH STORY DO YOU PREFER?"

SKRATCH: What's the best and worst part about being part of this band?

PETER: Well, the best part is also the worst: the fact that we are five completely different people with fairly damaged communicative skills. Honestly, we have nothing in common but The Haunted, early Deep Purple, Slayer, Black Sabbath and Autopsy. But that should be enough to keep any group of people together, right?

SKRATCH: Describe your take on the Dimebag Darrell situation. What was it like to be part of the tour that night, and can you give us any firsthand insight to the tragedy?

a personal level for the family, friends and fans of Dime. It's a tragedy on a national level in the United States. The fact that handguns are so easy to access across the United States is killing thousands of people every year. I don't hate guns.

I don't feel uncomfortable around guns. I like guns. They're fun. I've had access to guns, rifles and automatic weapons all my life. I've killed animals hunting and working as a butcher. I'm also not a pacifist. But nevertheless, guns are fucking dangerous. You

Now I'm aware it says that every man should have the right to bear arms in

the constitution. Sure, but the constitution is

guns and liquor drive thru stores

we have people arguing that instead of gun control, we should have more death penalties.



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Would you be a happier person if the love of your life got killed, and the person who did it got the chair? Would that get your baby back? Enough! This whole issue just pisses me off and makes me sad.

SKRATCH: Which audiences are better, U.S. or Europe and why?

PETER: Americans! Because, for some reason, they rock more and harder. It's only in the U.K. and at festivals and hardcore shows in Europe that the kids are really moshing it up, but it is getting better. Satanic black metal kids are the worst, like fucking mannequins standing around looking like Marilyn Manson on Quaaludes or glue, being severe and worrying about their makeup and piercings. Lame. Go sacrifice a cat or something!

SKRATCH: What are the plans for the band for 2005?

PETER: Tour.

SKRATCH: What do you like to do during your downtime at home? When on the road?

PETER: At home, I spend as much time as I can with my wife and kids. I spend a lot of time running and working out (but for some reason I still look fat even though I run seven miles every second day). Besides that, it's all rehearsing with The Haunted and Bring The War

Home. On the road, I sleep a lot. Look for cool books and weird porn. Go to gay discos or coffee shops and sit in a corner and laugh at the how strange and funny people are. I'm thinking on trying to do this interview book with different porn actors, but we'll see what happens with that.

SKRATCH: What bands are you currently into? Any music you like that the fans of The Haunted would be surprised with?

PETER: I'm still pretty hooked on Mars Volta's "Deloused..." and Perfect Circles "13 Steps". Also, I've been rediscovering the Misfits lately. Glenn Danzig used to be so fucking cool before he got into the whole Evil Elvis thing. Besides that, I'm still waiting for Henry Rollins to come up with something really good soon because it has been a while. And in my dreams, Phil Anselmo works out some of his demons and gets it into his heart and mind that we all love him and does some incredible work.

SKRATCH: How do you feel about the current state of heavy music?

PETER: I don't think of it. I never have. I like what I like and that's that. Very Forrest Gump, or Colonel Kurtz, I guess - you choose.

SKRATCH: What advice would you give to aspiring musicians?

PETER: Learn your shit. Devote yourself to the craft religiously. Body and soul. Sell your soul to Satan and get down with the beauty of the rock.

SKRATCH: What defines metal to you?

PETER: Nothing. It's just a word to describe this vastly wide pool of music that the so-called mainstream won't touch. Metal can be anything but the watered out, neo-blaxploitation, shallow shampoo and hair gel crap they sell on daytime MTV, VH1 and etc.

SKRATCH: What bands would you like to tour with that you haven't yet?

PETER: Limp Bizkit. Tool. System of a Down. Cypress Hill. Metallica. The South Parkapalooza. And of course, Fugazi, but pretend you didn't even hear that because that's never going to happen, unless of course ...

SKRATCH: How do you take care of your voice? Any secrets you'd like to let us in on?

PETER: It wouldn't be a secret if I did... would it? But yes, Satan is involved!

SKRATCH: What's your prediction for The Haunted in 2005?

PETER: That we will tour, tour, and tour some more. I know it's that one really dry answer I shouldn't be giving, but I really have no expectations and I'm too jaded to pretend I'm not. Only time will tell. I know we'll have a good time and anyone who comes along for the ride will too. See you all out there!

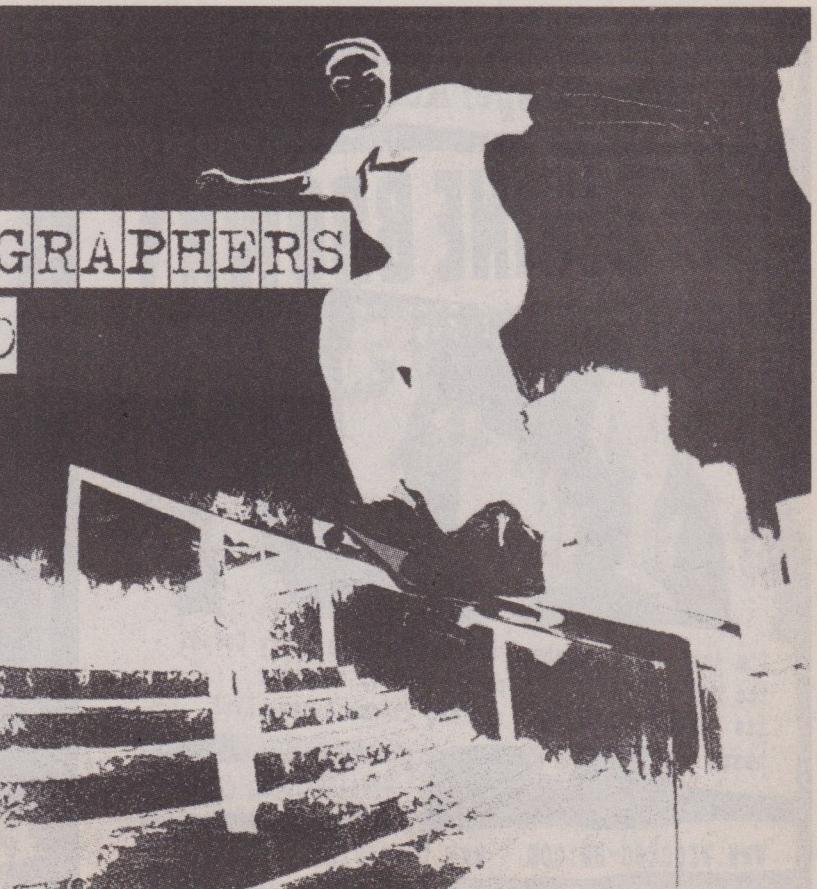


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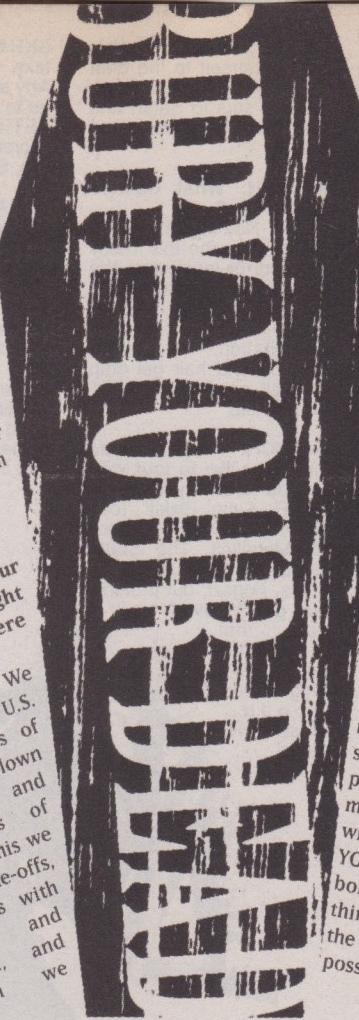


BURY YOUR DEAD

By Darren Davis

When thinking of the newer generation of hardcore bands that have been pouring out of New England like some sweaty, seedy onslaught, one can't pass up the touring machines known as Bury Your Dead. Initially formed as a joke, Bury Your Dead has been one of the many East Coast hardcore ensembles to start out as a side project of other bands—in this case, Harmartia—and then surpass their parent group and start to take on a life of their own. The quintet released their debut album YOU HAD ME AT HELLO on Century Media, toured non-stop—gaining a devoted fan base along the way—and then abruptly disbanded. 2004 marked the return of Bury Your Dead, hitting the scene as quickly as they had left it with a fresh lineup, heavier sound, and a

new album, COVER YOUR TRACKS (their Victory Records debut). I had a chance to chat with the boys of Bury Your Dead via e-mail to discuss the new record, their plans for world domination, and Tom Cruise.



a headline tour with The Red Chord, A Life Once Lost, and If Hope Dies.

SKRATCH: COVER YOUR TRACKS is being called one of the heaviest albums of the year. Did you guys set out to make an absurdly heavy record, or do you just play what you'd want to hear?

BURY YOUR DEAD: Well, with our writing process on this record, we didn't stick to a fast part/breakdown formula. We basically wrote, and COVER YOUR TRACKS was born—but a big thing was keeping the record heavy as

possible.

SKRATCH: Now, you've probably been asked this question many times before, but your previous album was called YOU HAD ME AT HELLO, an obvious JERRY MCGUIRE reference; and all of the tracks off of COVER YOUR TRACKS are titles of other Tom Cruise movies. Why Mr. Cruise?

BURY YOUR DEAD: Well, look at the man: he's a modern-day sex icon. He has been in the business forever, and we plan to do the same. We enjoy what we do and would not change it for anything.

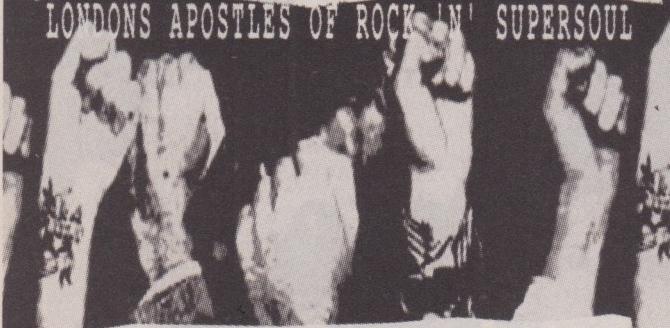
SKRATCH: What's your favorite Tom Cruise movie (or are they like your children, where you can't choose just one)?

BURY YOUR DEAD: I like that. I definitely can't choose just one. I enjoy over a handful of them: LOSIN IT, LEGEND, VANILLA SKY, TOP GUN, and more.

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SKRATCH: As a band, you claimed "teddy bears" playing brutal music. Do you think other bands in your genre take themselves too seriously as tough guys?

BURY YOUR DEAD: I think that, to an extent, I mean, for all five of us, this band is an outlet for nervous aggression and stress. But if we were to put the "game face" on every day, it may turn people off when they previously enjoyed the band.

SKRATCH: I understand Bury Your Dead started out as a joke band. When did you decide to take it seriously (or is it still a joke)? And when did Victory Records come into play?

BURY YOUR DEAD: The band was a joke band up until we broke up. Then I called Slim B and told him that if there were ever a time to re-form the band, that now was the time, while

the record was still fresh in everyone's head. Victory came into play after a set at the 2002 Hellfest in Syracuse, NY.

SKRATCH: Tell me about a typical Bury Your Dead live experience. What do you hope to give the crowd on a given night?

BURY YOUR DEAD: Well, our set can cause a frenzy in the mellowest people. It's non-stop energy. We hope to tire the crowd out and make them have to call in [sick] to work the next day.

SKRATCH: Are there any distinct differences between HAD ME AT HELLO and COVER YOUR TRACKS that

were intentional, or has your sound just evolved with time?

BURY YOUR DEAD: The sound between the last record and the new record shows the maturity in the band. Some people say it was too fast of a progression, but we beg to differ—and the new record that's coming will say it all.

SKRATCH: BYD went on a hiatus for a while, only to return seemingly out of nowhere stronger than ever. What happened during that break, and what caused the group to reunite with a new singer?

BURY YOUR DEAD: Well, I own a merchandise company and a clothing line back home. I am a very hard worker, and knew that Slim B and I could put together a solid lineup and put this band back on the map and take it where we first

had stated we wanted it to go. We reunited with a new singer and drummer when we reformed. It was because of personal problems that the lineup needed to change in order for it to work out.

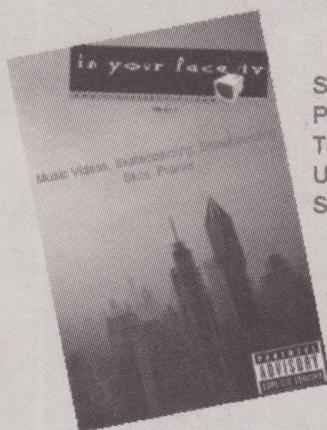
SKRATCH: Where do you see BYD in the future? Will we see another album even heavier than COVER YOUR TRACKS?

BURY YOUR DEAD: I see BYD continuing to tour full-time and supporting some larger acts [for] the remainder of the year. You will definitely see another heavy album from us, we promise.

SKRATCH: Any last words for the young, impressionable readers of SKRATCH?

BURY YOUR DEAD: Thanks for your support. Without everyone reading, coming to the shows, and buying our merchandise and records, none of this would be possible.

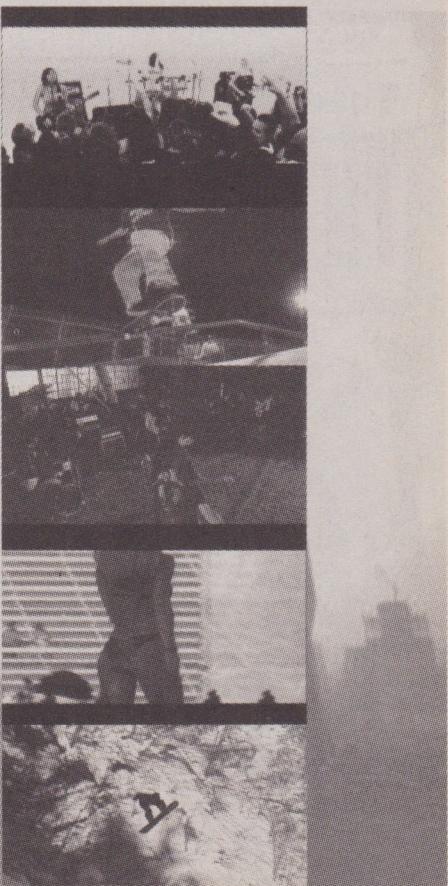
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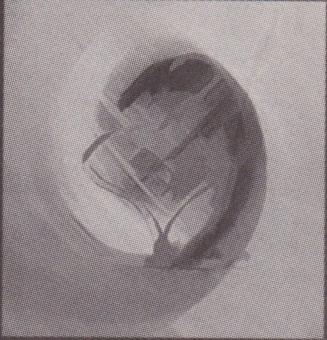
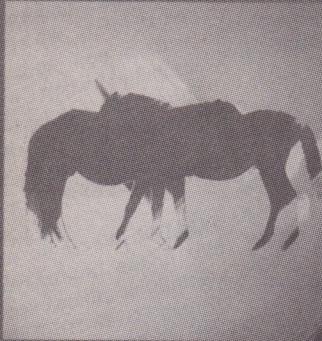
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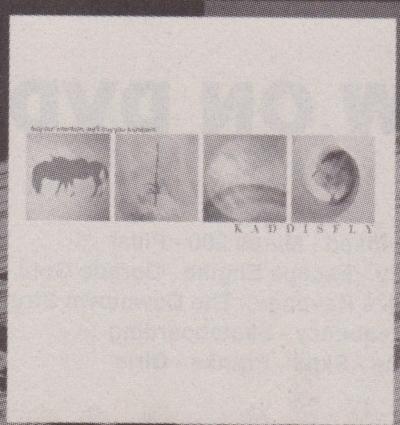


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Symphony in Peril By Luke Skywalker

Symphony in Peril has been entertaining the hardcore scene for the past two years because of their hugely successful album, **LOST MEMOIRS AND FADED PICTURES**. Making headlines this year, the musicians are releasing their sophomore project, **THE WHORE'S TROPHY**.

I got the chance to call drummer Collin Simula while the band was in Ohio before heading out to play the Northern VA Hardcore/Metal Fest at KC's.

SKRATCH: Your new album comes out in February.

COLLIN: We're pretty excited about. Everyone who's played it so far has enjoyed it.

SKRATCH: What's your favorite track off the new record?

COLLIN: I'd have to say probably the title track, part 1, just because I really like layout of song and how heavy it is. I guess I like a lot of the songs.

SKRATCH: The first track intro, "Perelandra", is taken from the second book of C.S. Lewis's space trilogy. Is C.S. Lewis a big influence on you and the band?

COLLIN: We all appreciate C.S. Lewis and his writing, but our guitarist is a big fan of that track. [...]

SKRATCH: The artwork on the album seemed to scare a few of my girlfriends. What's your impression?

sion?

COLLIN: I couldn't be more happy with the artwork. Asterik Design Studios in Seattle did their own interpretation [of the Book of Revelations], and if you read the verses it came from, then you can see the message. I like how striking it is. Most people are like, "Whoa." I hope it gets listeners to say "wow."

SKRATCH: What verse is it taken from?

COLLIN: It's from Revelations 17, and it doesn't necessarily say a whole lot, but it's about a whore of Babylon, this woman who was satanic and beautiful with riches but was tricking people [...].

SKRATCH: You will be headlining the second night of Facedown Fest, Saturday, March 19. How does that feel? Last year you played like third or fourth night.

COLLIN: It's definitely a blessing. We were all just blown away by that. Comeback Kid headlined last year, and it was nuts—and so to headline this year is awesome.

SKRATCH: It seems that a lot of the Facedown bands trade members. Have you been in any other memorable bands?

COLLIN: I've been in bands since high school, and this is the first serious band. The others had their own bands, but this is the only Facedown band for everyone.

SKRATCH: Where did you guys meet?

COLLIN: Shawn met Andy, and they were the formative members of the band. A couple members left, and there were lineup changes when I joined. Josh was Andy's friend, so he joined. I met them when I was at early Symphony in Peril shows. They asked if I wanted to play bass, but then I moved to drums after other Shawn—the first Shawn—left. And then the other Andy (who played

bass and who I knew from church) joined.

SKRATCH: In regards to a concert, what would be the perfect lineup to play with?

COLLIN: [Laughs] Personally, I'd say a good show would be Converge headlining [...] or maybe Mastodon and Lamb of God.

SKRATCH: What are your musical influences?

COLLIN: Musical influences.... We kind of come from all over the place. I'm one of the only members who listens to metal and hardcore all the time, whereas Josh and Andy listen to indie rock and other rock. (I listen to that, as well.) From a songwriting aspect, for this record we were influenced by Lamb of God, Unearth, Slipknot, and a collective of music we listen to.

SKRATCH: Where do you see yourself progressing?

COLLIN: I think the first album was a lot more chaotic and studio technical and encompassed over a year's worth of writing since the beginning of the band, so it felt like it was disjointed. People seemed to like it. With this record, we made the point to make a solid record. We wrote it in like two months. It's more straightforward metal and hardcore. I feel like album has a stronger flow and fits together better.

SKRATCH: How do you feel about reflecting your faith in music?

COLLIN: Shawn writes all the lyrics, and it's a big part of his life and all our lives. It definitely comes across in our lyrics, but we're not trying to be preachy; but just talk about where we're at. And not just in music, but at shows. We don't preach, but at a show we don't deny what we believe. We're not out there to shove faith down people's throat.

SKRATCH: If there is one thing you could tell our readers, what

would that be?

COLLIN: I guess I see a lot of kids in the heavy music

scene/hardcore scene, and I see kids being a little too serious. I take the music and message seriously, but kids get a little too into it and end up shutting out other people and are so ingrained in their beliefs that they don't respect each other. I feel that if people had a good time and respect others and what others believe in, we'd all have a good time. I look at the hardcore scene and see people who are religious/political, straight-edge or vegan—it doesn't matter.

SKRATCH:

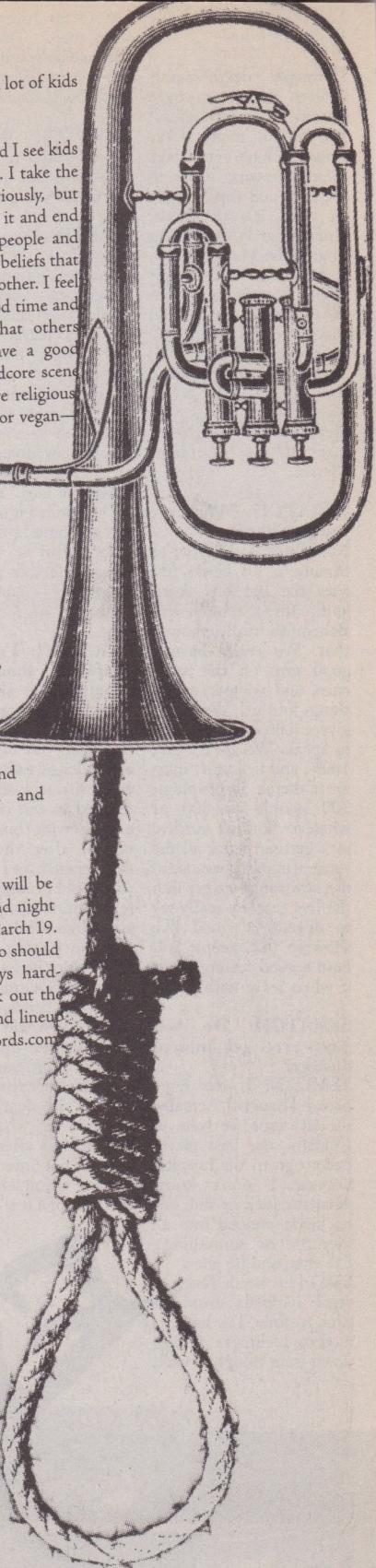
you think people are too judgmental?

COLLIN:

Definitely. I mean, it comes from religious beliefs, politics, and dumb fashion trends, where kids say, "I'm not going to respect him." It's not just about music but about being artistic and about being open and respecting others.

Symphony in Peril will be headlining the second night of Facedown Fest March 19. I will be there, and so should everyone who enjoys hardcore. You can check out the concert and the band lineup at www.facedownrecords.com

Symphony in Peril



EXMORTEM
By Janelle Jones

Denmark death-metal dealers Exmortem have toured throughout Europe on many occasions but have yet to take their harrowing wares to the U.S. and finally show us what it's all about. Unfortunately, according to guitarist Martin Sigtry, it may be a while longer before that can happen. In the meantime, we can find succor in **NIHILISTIC CONTENTMENT**, Exmortem's excruciating new LP.

Here, some enlightenment on the band from Martin.

SKRATCH: What are you guys like live?

MARTIN: I think we've become a lot better live over the last few years, and this tour with Behemoth really showed that. We really have a good grip on the audience, and we put everything into it. We never give a half-assed show, so to speak. We always give 100%, and it doesn't matter if there's 50 people or 300 people or 800 or whatever. I think our live set's getting better all the time—in part because of the new songs we get into the live set. We really try to develop a good live show so that people will have a good feeling about it when we're with them.

SKRATCH: Do you guys ever get injured onstage?

MARTIN: It has happened. [Laughs] Actually, the last time we were in England, our bass player had to go to the hospital because...I don't know what the fuck he did, but he kinda jumped into a monitor or something like that, and he got a hole in his head. That stuff happens from time to time. I've had a few accidents falling down from things, as well,

but so far [they] haven't been major injuries, just like maybe you have to sit out one day. We try to stay in shape. [Laughs]

SKRATCH: With the bassist going to the hospital, you had to end the set, or did you go through it?

MARTIN: We just [continued] without him, actually. [Laughs] I remember once in Holland (I think) when we even played without our singer; but people thought it was cool because we didn't cancel. We just went out there and asked [the audience], "Do you want us to play an instrumental set?" And they were like, "Yeah." So we just pulled it off. It was actually quite a fun experience. But it would've been preferable with our singer, obviously. [Laughs]

SKRATCH: I'm a bit confused about this drummer situation. What exactly is going on?

MARTIN: The thing is that with our old drummer Michael (who recorded on this new album) we decided to end our cooperation with him like a month after the album was finished. So I contacted our old drummer Reno [ex-Dimmu Borgir] and asked him if he was interested in playing with us again, since he had moved back to Denmark and wasn't in bands, and he thought it would be cool. The thing was that he had to work a lot, and maybe he didn't have that sincere interest in death metal anymore or whatever it was, because after a while he was not interested in touring so much. There was kind of a few different

things about that, so we then got in contact with this new guy called Morten, who's now our permanent drummer. He just blew our feet away from the first rehearsal, so it's really perfect now. But the whole thing's really confusing because there've been three different names on the drum chair within half a year.

SKRATCH: Is that hard for you guys to have to start playing with new people?

MARTIN: It's a pain in the ass, really. It's very time-demanding, as well, because we have to rehearse with new guys for the set and everything. From the time when Michael left the band until we actually started rehearsing, it was like four months—so for four months the band was kinda standing still; and we had just made a new album and really just wanted to go forward all the time, so that was a shitty situation for us. So, yeah, it's not really fun to have all these changes; but I'm glad we now have a new permanent guy, and I hope he'll stay around for a while.

SKRATCH: And about the new record, [...] you've put out a number of albums before, so how have you progressed or changed from record to record?

MARTIN: I actually think there's a clear development on each album, and I don't think any of our albums sound the same, so I'm really satisfied with that. And for this new one, the most clear development is that we tried to incorporate some more variation in

each song, and we even made some slower stuff, like "Black Walls of Misery", which is really a standout for me on this album. And the whole sound production and songwriting and the vocal work... I'm really satisfied with the direction we've gone in, and I'm really looking forward to take a step forward on the next one.

SKRATCH: What about lyrically? Do you see any changes in that, too?

MARTIN: I think you can say that the lyrics on this one are kind of a continuation of what I started on the last one, the **P E S T I L E N C E EMPIRE** album. The lyrics are very kind of negative and pessimistic, so to speak. When I look at this world and us humans and the way we behave, that really inspires me to write some really pessimistic and negative stuff. And then maybe I just combine that with inspiration from books and films. I try to make some lyrics that won't be so typical, like gore lyrics or whatever in death metal, satanic lyrics. I try to make something with a bit of a twist, and hopefully people will find a few new things in it.

SKRATCH: So, okay, DO you consider yourself a misanthrope?

MARTIN: Well, when I sit down and look at the world and think about it, mankind, whatever, I would say maybe yes. But on the other hand, I'm just a guy that's having a lot of fun and just enjoying whatever I'm doing, so I'm not a misanthrope, in that aspect. I'm not sitting at home in a dark room and just being pissed off all the time.

It's just those matters... When it comes to the lyrics, it just turns out that way. And I guess it also has something to do with the fact I think that this is the most appropriate kind of stuff to write for a death-metal band [...].

SKRATCH: What are your views on religion?

MARTIN: Again, that's a huge inspiration for me. When I look at this religious fanaticism around the world, it's just sickening. I just really can't understand how anyone can think like that and live by those rules and all that shit. It's really unbelievable for me to watch these things that are going on. I'm definitely getting a lot of inspiration from that, as well. I think it's ridiculous.

SKRATCH: Right. Just where I am in America with this current president, how religion is so tied in—it's like you said: sickening.

Truly. Anyway, this is your first record associated with Earache. You seem really happy to be with them.

MARTIN: Again, that's a huge step forward for Exmortem. This is the first time we have a really proper release in the U.S. [...] and in several parts of the world. Earlier it had been more or less just focused on the European market, so I'm really happy with [what's going on now—]

I think so far they're doing a good job promoting the album and setting up interviews—like this one, for example. I think we're doing really good right now with them.

SKRATCH: Also, you guys have been around for quite a long time. What do you find the driving force to be behind the band?

MARTIN: [...] I guess we started out because we wanted to do this and that and a rebellion kinda thing, but nowadays it's more like I want to progress [...] and make better songs and go on better tours and make the band grow. [...] I want to push myself and push the way I make the riffing and all that kind of stuff. That's really what keeps me going on. The music, that's really the driving force in this band, because that's the most important thing to me. When I grab my guitar, this is the kind of riffs and music that comes out, so it's really become a natural part of who I am.

SKRATCH: What would you like people to know about Exmortem?

MARTIN: We just try to tell people that we're a hardworking band and that we're really serious about this and have been for years. Sometimes I feel some people, if they see the name Exmortem, they combine it with some really old-school metal or whatever, because, "Oh, I've seen that somewhere," blah blah blah. But I think our new album is really a great 2005 death-metal album. We're not playing like we did in '95.

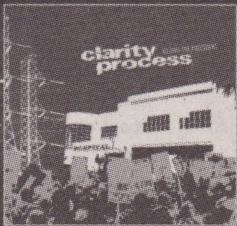
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The Goodwill
By David Walter

Oftentimes bands fall into the trap of watching their musical style and structure grow stale with time. It's always easier not to move ahead and stay with what your familiar with. This is not the case for Long Island's The Goodwill. This extremely hard-working five-piece is getting ready to release their second full-length, INSULT, INJURY, ETC... on March 8, 2005, on Abacus Recordings. They have a lot to live up to, since their debut album went on to be the biggest-selling album in the history of the label.

Vocalist Brian Barbuto recently discussed with us the maturity of the band and how that is displayed on their newest release. Everything from the growth and progression from the lyrics to the music is touched upon. He also discusses working in the studio with Dean Baltulonis and how touring has helped mold the band into who they are today.

SKRATCH: With the release of your newest album, INSULT, INJURY, ETC..., you guys wanted the music to hold more of a darker sound. What made you guys want to incorporate that darker element into this release?

BRIAN: I guess you can say it was the mood we were in at the time of writing. It's not like we were planning

on it being darker; it just happened that way. Well, maybe being goth kids had something to do with it—just a little. [Laughs]

SKRATCH: You guys wrote your first album at the young age of 18. How far have you guys grown as a band while growing up at the same time?

BRIAN: I was the only 18-year-old in the band when it started, so from the first album to this one was a huge leap forward, in my opinion. The band is totally different now: everyone is old and has back problems. So yeah, we have grown, and it is shown through the difference between the two LPs. [...] Everything on this album is much more mature and real. I think with time every band has some kind of natural progression, be it positive or negative.

SKRATCH: You guys worked in the studio with Dean Baltulonis, who has worked with Brand New and The Bouncing Souls. Were you guys intimidated going into the studio to

work with Dean?

BRIAN: Not at all. I love Dean, and he holds it down for us. Well, I think the other guys were nervous, because, you know, they always are. Nah, I'm just kidding. They're professionals.

SKRATCH: Was working with Dean Baltulonis a learning experience at all for you guys?

BRIAN: Yes. He kept us grounded and tasteful.

SKRATCH: The lyrics on this album have definitely taking a step in a different direction for you guys. On this album, the lyrics are geared largely towards a social criticism. Does this growth and change again go back to you guys maturing as people and a band?

BRIAN: Yes, it does. I write all the lyrics and have many different views from when I was 18. I'm the jerk behind the lyrics, and over time I was getting very tired writing about girls leaving me, because I'm a pimp and I do my thing. Plus, I needed to grow up a little bit and start writing about

things that aren't so retarded.

SKRATCH: With the lyrics on this album hitting much more mature topics, does INSULT, INJURY, ETC... have a specific mood or theme to it?

BRIAN: Yes, it does: "Beat it, geek." That's what I have to say to everyone out there in the atmosphere.

SKRATCH: You guys have definitely put an emphasis on touring more than you did in the early days of the band. Have your touring experiences helped shape the band you are today?

BRIAN: Yes, touring has shaped us into band we are today. Playing every day makes you tighter, and the chemistry just flows.

SKRATCH: Is touring and playing live the aspect of being in the band that you love the most, or is it more of the recording process?

BRIAN: I love both aspects. I love playing shows because of all the crazy energy that has filled the room. It just gets me high.

But I also love the studio, because its just hot.

SKRATCH: To me, this album almost has the feeling and energy of a live show. Was that a conscious effort on the band's part or just how it turned out?

BRIAN: That's really just how the album turned out. Lucky for us.

SKRATCH: You have one band that you can play a worldwide tour with. What band is it, and why?

BRIAN: Last night I was with my friends Kevin, Christian, and Asian Matt, and I asked them this very same question. There were many great answers, but the one that I would have to say is Andre 3000. Yep.

SKRATCH: How has your relationship with Abacus Recordings been since the day you signed with them?

BRIAN: It was something we dreamed for. They are the sickest label ever, and we are so very much in love with them.

SKRATCH: After this album hits stores, what's next for The Goodwill?

BRIAN: We will be touring our hot little asses off—so come to the shows, kids.

The Goodwill will release INSULT, INJURY, ETC... on March 8, 2005. You can listen to a few tracks off their latest album on the band's PureVolume site at www.purevolume.com/the-goodwill.



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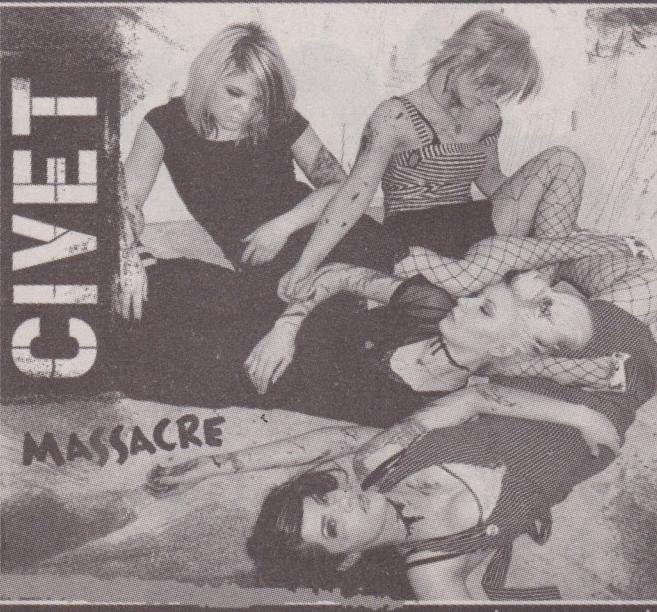
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USURPER
By Janelle Jones

"Only Usurper could write an album that's actually called CRYPTOBEST and lyrically make it fit," says bassist Jon Necromancer. He and henchman guitarists Rick Scythe and Carcass Chris, "vokillist" Dan Tyrantor, and drummer Joe Apocalyptic Warlord are, after all, self-described "weird dudes" who live, breathe, and eat metal. The Chicago five-piece's latest opus of destruction is a healthy helping of annihilating and crushing, balls-to-the-wall death metal/thrash sprinkled generously with dark, supernatural-themed lyrics.

SKRATCH: You've toured Europe [twice]. Did you have any absinthe while you were there?

JON: Any absinthe? [Laughs] We didn't get any when we were on tour, but I went back there on vacation [...] then [...] got some absinthe.

SKRATCH: What's it like?

JON: You know what? [Laughs] I was on so many other drugs and other forms of alcohol that it was hard to tell exactly [how]

absinthe [is] in between the speed and the hash and drinking beer all night. By the time I started drinking absinthe, I was already fucked up.

SKRATCH: Sounds like fun.

JON: Yeah, actually, it was great. Someone showed me the pictures. It looked like I was having a wonderful time. [Laughs]

SKRATCH: Oh, man. That's always good; you get the pictures, you're like, "Oh no!" [Laughter] [...] So, Dan just joined in 2003, and you've had some line-up changes in the past. Would you say this line-up is pretty solid now?

JON: Yeah, having been through the line-up changes that we've had over the years, we always knew when something's not right. When someone's not pulling their weight or not 100% into something; you can tell right away. We've had other drummers in the past who couldn't give 100% just playing-wise and even with their attitude, and it just drags the whole band down. The General (the old singer), before he quit, the last couple years he couldn't care

less about the band, and it was just terrible. Everybody else is beating their head against the wall trying to make something happen [...] and the General couldn't give a fuck. But now everybody wants to play shows, record, wants the album to do well, rehearse and practice and do all that—not only the cool stuff that goes with being a band, but even the crappy shit.

Everybody's ready to tackle it [and] get it done. I think it comes through in the music and even on the album. There's a feeling of confidence. We really work well together. We've all known each other for so many years. It's just a completely comfortable feeling. [...] We all know everyone is in it for the long haul. It's a refreshing feeling after all these years when someone was always ready to quit or always looked to be kicked out. [Laughs] [...]

SKRATCH: You're saying you've known everyone for a while? Like Dan—you knew him before he joined.

JON: Yeah, Dan and I were in a band together in the late '80s/early '90s. [...] Dan and Joe grew up on the

same block. They went to school together and everything. So we've all known each other for 15, 20 years or longer in some cases.

SKRATCH: He was the first person who came to mind when you knew you needed a new singer?

JON: Absolutely. At first we couldn't believe the General quit. [...] We were sort of expecting, it but we didn't expect it when it happened. At first we thought he wasn't serious about quitting and that [he'd] come back, but after a couple days it became apparent that he was done, so the first thing we had to decide was: Are we gonna continue on as a band, or are we gonna throw in the towel? Or are we gonna change the name of the band. And we just said, Fuck it. The General wasn't the identity of Usurper. Everybody else was still ready to go 150%, so once we decided to think of somebody else to front the band, Dan was the natural choice.

SKRATCH: Well, that's good he wanted to do it, right? [Laughs]

USURPER



RIOT AND DESTROY

EITHER IT'LL BE GREAT AND THEY'LL HAVE
THE PLACE, OR IT'LL SUCK AND THEY'LL
RIOT AND DESTROY
THE PLACE."

JON: Yeah, it worked out.
[Laughs] He didn't have a choice: he had to do it, or else!

SKRATCH: We have to talk about the album. How would you say it compares to past records?

JON: I think it's more aggressive than the other albums. In the older stuff, especially, we had a lot more mid-paced parts, a lot more slower, heavier, dirge-sounding elements, and this one is more high-octane. There's still the classic heavy-metal, Usurper, mid-paced crunchy stuff, but a lot of it is just a little more over-the-top. And having Joe back in the band playing drums [...] With the old drummer we sometimes had to write songs to cater to his inability to play really fast, so a lot of the songs got stuck where we could only work within a certain boundary; but with the lineup we have now, we can play anything, so we figured, Fuck it—let's just go totally balls-out. Also this album was more spontaneous than the others. We threw the whole thing together in a few months and went in the studio and banged it out in record time. There was this vibe, this immediacy, when we were recording and writing it. We just felt we had to keep moving on—"Let's write another song." We

were so excited with the line-up and with the way the songs were coming out. [...] Usurper is not a thinking-man's band. [Laughs] So, the more planned it is and thought-out...it doesn't work. This one was completely spontaneous, and I think it really worked to our advantage.

SKRATCH: You've played some of these live already?
JON: We've played "Kill for Metal" live.

SKRATCH: [Laughs] I was gonna mention that. I can picture everyone singing along to that one.

“I’m really happy we chose to come out as the anthem. That was kinda the idea when [Rick] was putting it together. That’s the natural live song. It really just has that sing-along quality. We were inspired to write a song like that [for] when we play Europe where no one really speaks English but everyone seems to know the words “heavy metal!” and “kill!”—the classic metal sayings. [...] That’s a chorus where anyone anywhere in the world, if they’re into it, can totally remember it and chant along. It’s always fun to make that connection when you’re playing live, to connect with the audience at that kind of a level—especially if you’re in another culture in a different coun-

try, where if you're talking in between songs they don't understand anything you're saying. They look at you with a blank face. [Laughs] [...] It came out to be a pretty catchy tune.

SKRATCH: I guess you'll see how it works [when you tour] South America [later this year].

JON: Yeah, the proof'll be in the pudding. Either it'll be great and they'll have a riot and destroy the place, or it'll suck and they'll riot and destroy the place.

SKRATCH: Lyrically, what inspires your love for the macabre? Just that you're "weird" guys or whatever?
JON: I guess so. I don't know if we're inspired by being weird [or] because we're weird makes our inspirations what they are. It's hard to really pinpoint it like that. I never really thought about why we think the way we do. I guess it's more of a deeper philosophical discussion than I'm prepared to get into in a music magazine. It's just the way we all are. I think it's from being poisoned in the metal scene for so many years. We're all 'ber metal fans obviously. I think it's just part of that culture. Music to us is just as much a part of life as eating food or taking a shit. [...] [Metal] has been such a part [of me] for so long....

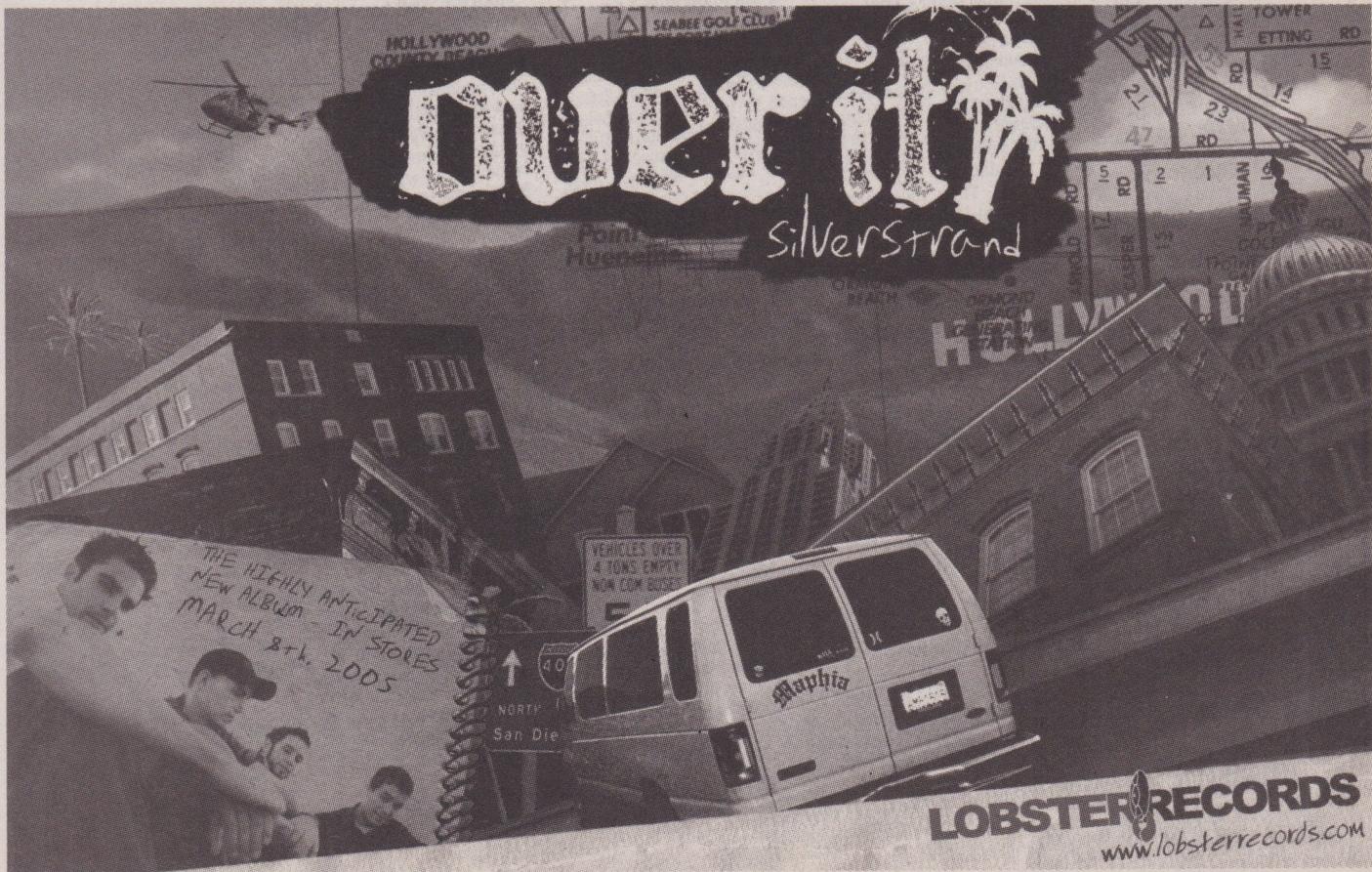
It's hard to separate the man from the beast, I guess.

SKRATCH: From the "cryptobeast."

JON: [Laughs] Yeah, the weird man from the crypto-beast.

SKRATCH: What would you like people to know about Usurper?

JON: Goddamn.... Basically, just to give our music a chance. A lot of times we got slammed early on as being a Celtic Frost rip-off. They're a big influence on us, but we've been still getting this comment, even on the last couple albums. I think an album like CRYPTO-BEAST doesn't sound like Frost much at all. Especially since the General's gone, the vocals are different. We're still getting those comments, and it drives me fucking crazy. Just listen to the music—don't listen to the name Usurper or any of the bullshit you might've heard about the band. See if you like the album, just see if you like the music, and take it from there. If we could get a fresh perspective, I think we'd have more of a chance of being respected a little more, because it seems sometimes we're considered a novelty band almost.



NARCOLEPTIC YOUTH

NARCOLEPTIC YOUTH
By Marcus Solomon

This band sounds like a blending of Alkaline Trio, AFI, and smoothed-out Casualties—provided you are listening with your head way up your ass. Seriously now, Narcoleptic Youth is a good-natured yet frenetic temper tantrum of the high-speed punk variety. Crass, juvenile humor is melded with intelligent social critique and delivered with rapid-fire vocals and no-frills shredding musicianship. Sometimes the shows are as sloppy as a retard bukkake, while others are examples of fine-tuned cohesion. Another frame of reference is to know that frontman Joey Bondage's favorite band is The Dickies. Since its inception in 1992, this band has built an impressively large and loyal following without assistance from labels or distributors. It has taken only 12 short years for someone to take proper notice, and now the boys will soon have an EP available from Galeforce Records entitled SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW, SOMETHING BORROWED; and Finger Records will be releasing a 22-track collection of singles called CHRONOLOGICAL DISORDER. The Finger Records production was mastered by punk virtuoso East Bay Ray of Dead Kennedys, and the first 1000 copies will be limited editions with exclusive artwork done by Pete of The Adicts.

Let us now turn to the band members themselves and let them undo any and all compliments ever paid to them.

Joey Bondage—vox
Jay Sin—guitar
Binky the elf—guitar
Nick Nautilus—bass
Johnny Cat Scabies (not litter)—drums

SKRATCH: Why the hell am I interviewing you guys?

ALL: (Laughs)

JOHNNY CAT: It might have something to do with the new releases.

JOEY: We just did an interview with SKRATCH not too long ago.

SKRATCH: How did you hook up with Finger Records?

JAY SIN: I was hanging out at Sparks (i.e., a bar) getting wasted, and I met the manager of The Skulls. It was Halloween, and he was wearing this Twister (i.e., the game) outfit, and he hooked us up.

JOEY: This project is something we had always considered doing, because it was a singles collection. We just never had the money to do it, because everything up to this point has been D.I.Y. "Last Minute Records." That's just us.

BINKY: We remastered everything.

SKRATCH: That's great that you are on Finger Records. Those are some great people, and their product is turning up in a lot of places. I hear some things on Indie 103.1 FM, and I heard a bit of El Centro on VIVA LA BAM on MTV.

ALL: (Various shouts of agreement)

JOEY: We have never had the distribution before. You know, there are bands on Epitaph that have opened for us, and I can't believe they have never called us! (Laughs) But we do have this great fan base because we have just gone out and hustled. We have great fans.

JOHNNY: We are already seeing the difference from being with this label. Our stuff is everywhere, and it's all because of them.

SKRATCH: How did you like the recent negative show review in SKRATCH with the highly inaccurate band comparisons?

JOEY: When you're on the stage, you're up for criticism. I thought that was one of the best shows we have ever played! But I have never worn white face makeup, and our band sounds nothing like Alkaline Trio or AFI. I don't let that sort of thing bother me. Sometimes we play a good show and get bad reviews, and other times we play like crap and someone says we're brilliant.

JOHNNY CAT: We try to play the best we can every time.

SKRATCH: It sucks to learn that your band will never again play at the Showcase Theatre because of some business disagreement.

JOEY: We would, but certain terms and prior obligations would have to be met.

JAY SIN: I get strip-searched every time I go there. (Laughs)

SKRATCH: How did you discover punk rock, and what motivated you to create it?

JOEY: From my two older sisters, who are about 10 years older. I was about eight years old. They and their boyfriends were into punk. I just loved it. The first bands I ever heard were The Toy Dolls, The Adicts, The Damned, Youth Brigade (...) I just got hooked. This was somewhere around '82.

NICK: That's when I was born!

JOEY: (Laughs) It was just completely different than anything I had ever heard before. Like, The Toy Dolls, it sounded like The Chipmunks on crack. (Laughs) Every band sounded different.

SKRATCH: Your band makes some disturbing social observations, but there is a definite humorous spin to it.

JOEY: I like to write social commentary, but as a band we try not to be political. Either you end up preaching to the choir or you piss off a lot of people who already do not agree. If you really want to change minds, just say the core truths of what you believe.

BINKY: Right. There is a big difference between saying, "Bush is a dick!" over and over...

SKRATCH: Don't insult my dick by comparing it to him!

BINKY: (Laughs) ...Or by simply saying, "This is not right!"

JOEY: I prefer to write songs that speak to the culture.

SKRATCH: Look around you and notice that a large segment of this culture has become very "Seig heil!"

JOEY: Yeah, that's true. It's kind of scary.

BINKY: I think what we have now is a monopoly, and there is no way to unseat them.

SKRATCH: True, there is obviously a lot of manipulation behind the scenes, and democracy itself may very well be a well-played illusion—but the important question is: Do you consider Narcoleptic Youth to be the MAD TV of punk rock?

BINKY: That would be a great compliment.

JAY SIN: We are when we get drunk. I'm drunk right now. (Laughs)

SKRATCH: Has the mainstream media ever paid attention to your group?



"I'm drunk right now."

BINKY: That chick at the IEMA (Inland Empire Music Awards). It was on some local television station out in the desert.

JOEY: (Dismissively) That doesn't count. There was something for public TV in Thailand. Was it real? I don't know.

SKRATCH: I am so tired and feeling very inarticulate at the moment.

JOHNNY CAT: That's okay, because all generic questions can be answered at the Website. You can read all the band history, and there's a lot of other stuff on there.

SKRATCH: (To Jay Sin) What's that on your arm?

JAY SIN: It's a tattoo of the bar code from CHRONOLOGICAL DISORDER.

JOEY: It's the actual bar code on the CD.

SKRATCH: That's dedication. I think it would be really great if this band broke through and got really big. Seriously, it can happen. You guys are not so ugly. In fact, the public might find you quite handsome. You know the public listens more with its eyes than with the ears.

JOEY: Well, that's true, but...I don't know.

SKRATCH: Are you planning to tour to support the newest releases?

JOEY: Yeah. We are looking at going to Europe and Spain this summer. That would be just a little two-week thing. We are looking at playing anywhere all over the U.S.

SKRATCH: Now provide our readers with some profound words of departure.

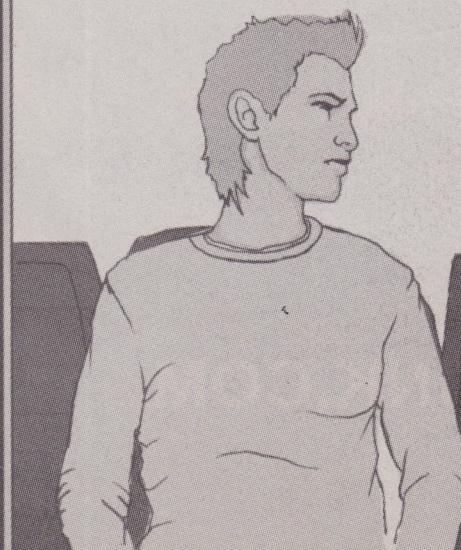
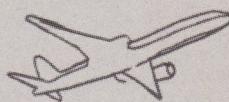
NICK: Thank you.

JAY SIN: FLUNK ROCK FOREVER!

Narcoleptic Youth sucks, and Marcus is an idiot. This band sounds like Elton John meets Slayer with a countrified satanic reggae influence and just a hint of hip-hop metal. Find out for yourself at www.narcolepticyouth.com

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Over It
Interview by Melissa Wong

Home, sweet home. Could it be the fresh aroma of home-cooked meals? Or the comfort of your old bedroom with all four walls covered in band posters? Or maybe it's driving past the high-school hangouts that have now become new businesses. No matter what comes to mind when you think of "home" or whatever physical and emotional feeling it emits, it will always have a special place in your heart. Then, BAM: one day everyone grows up and moves on, which makes having a sense of home hard to find. The guys from Over It know exactly how hard it is, but they have made their move work for them. The guys moved to California, got a new label, a new house, and an addition to the family, Damon, the family pup. Over It has been busy touring the U.S. and overseas, as well as working on SILVERSTRAND, which will be out March 8th on Lobster Records.

Here's the interview with Seth, Nick, and Peter.

SKRATCH: After changing record labels and relocating to California, what have you enjoyed most about the decision to move?

SETH: The move has challenged us to be much more active people. Out here there is something to do every single night. Shows are going on all the time, and every venue is booked every night. Washington D.C. had all the cool venues, but the cool shows were few and far between. We've really enjoyed every aspect of moving out west, maybe because it's all gone so smoothly. We were lucky and found a cozy little house in Huntington Beach that we all share.

NICK: Living in California is amazing! It gives us a chance to network with bands and tons of kids and industry. There are always shows and tons of rad venues, not to mention the scene out here is killer—and, we are close to the beach! What more could you ask for?

PETER: An ORANGE TREE! (Got it.)

SKRATCH: The new album will be out MARCH 8th. Tell me more about this album.

NICK: Making SILVERSTRAND was the best recording experience yet! We got to use all different kinds of gear, spent a lot more time on pre-production, and had some cool parties! I didn't like how we got kicked out of our apartment in Huntington and had to move to the studio for a couple weeks before we found another place. That was a pain!

SKRATCH: Do you have a favorite song off of SILVERSTRAND?

SETH: My favorite song from the record is called "Shine". It's one of the more relaxed songs on the record. We used to call it "slow jam" during the pre-production sessions. I tend to pick my favorite songs to play live as my favorite songs on the records.

SKRATCH: My favorite songs were "Waiting", and "Worry Bomb". What was the inspiration behind these?

NICK: "Waiting", similar to a lot of the songs on the album, is about moving out on our own leaving our friends and family behind. It's the sum of lost blood, sweat, and tears. "Worry Bomb" is about a friend who couldn't stay out of trouble. We were worried about him, so we wrote a song about it.

SKRATCH: How have you grown musically between TIMING IS EVERYTHING and SILVERSTRAND?

NICK: YES! We've learned a lot more as players, musicians, and songwriters. We have a lot more influences musically now [...].

SKRATCH: What are the pros and cons of being a musician?

SETH: I saw a shirt that summed it up real well. It said: "I have no money, no job, no car...but I'm in a band." I wonder if most kids today recognize that the bulk of indie bands don't really make a dime.

NICK: Pros are expressing yourself, jamming with your homies, and meeting your idols and making new friends all over the

world. Cons are people who think, "Oh, you are in a band—you don't know what real work is." [Laughs] That's so funny to me. And relationships are difficult when you are always on tour and away from loved ones.

SKRATCH: What are the tour plans for 2005?

NICK: We plan on touring for the whole year. Expect to see us in your town real soon!

SKRATCH: You guys have toured Japan, Canada, and Mexico. What are the crowds like there?

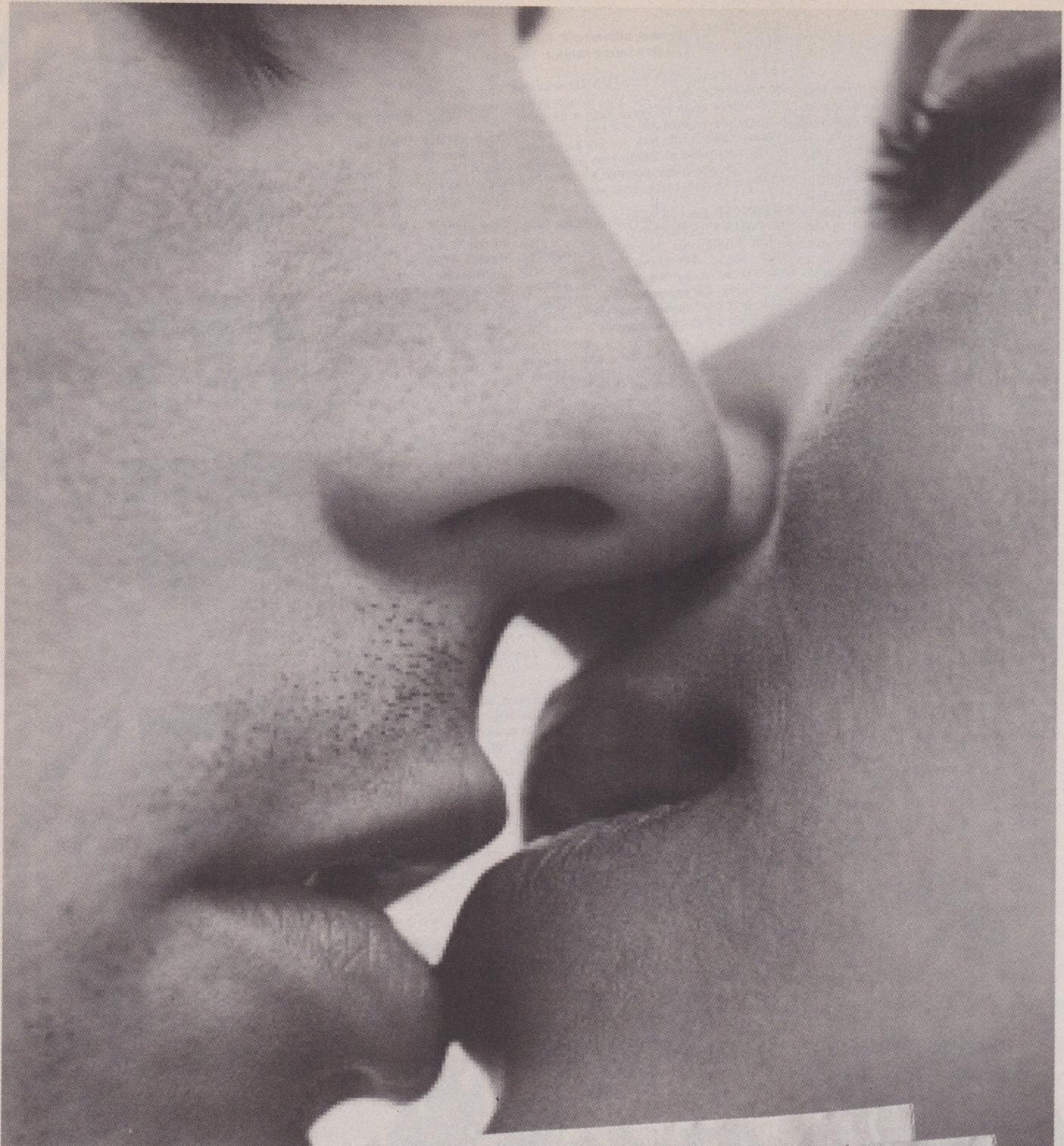
SETH: Japan has been incredible to Over It. It's been our first out of North America touring experience; and because we have this really kick-ass label over there called Big Mouth Japan, everything has been almost too good to be true. The Japanese fans seem to have 40 times the energy of kids in the U.S. They are super passionate about music over there.

SKRATCH: What are the five best albums ever?

NICK: This is the hardest question ever! I will have to base this off my current faves: Bodyjar's HOW IT WORKS, HIM's LOVE METAL, Goo Goo Dolls' DIZZY UP THE GIRL, Strung Out's SUBURBAN TEENAGE WASTELAND BLUES, and Green Day's DOOKIE.

Check out Over It's "Siren on the 101" video at www.overitonline.com to listen to SILVERSTRAND mp3s.





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GLORY OF THIS
By Janelle Jones

Pensacola, FL's Glory of This have only been together about a year, but they've already released a full-length, ADORATION (on Indianola) and toured various chunks of the country, including some dates on the 2004 Warped Tour. A melodic hardcore band, they may not be the most original stylistically, but GOT's vision (at least for now) isn't to "reinvent the wheel," according to the very personable vocalist James Harrah. They're passionate about what they do and have the requisite tenacity to make some major things happen in 2005 and beyond.

SKRATCH: To what do you attribute your quick success?

JAMES: [...] As soon as we got together [as Glory of This] and recorded enough songs, we pushed it with every spare minute of the day to make sure people knew who it was and to get a record label. And all we do now is work. Where we're at right now, we're not getting a whole lot of help from a lot of people. [...] We don't have a band manager that's gotten us on big tours. We just do it all ourselves [and have] a lot of dedication towards our music because we love it so much.

SKRATCH: The local bands you guys were in previously, were they stylistically similar to this?

JAMES: Oh, man. The drummer and I were in bands that were nothing but metal and thrash-core and technical, the bass player was in a pop-punk band, and both guitar players were in some radio rock band that had big label interest-and then they all broke up. But yeah, we come from such a diverse musical background that when we get in the same room, everybody has ideas, and when they all come together it kinda makes what we have now.

SKRATCH: That's pretty cool that you all have different influences.

JAMES: I've been told to mention Killswitch Engage [and] Alive or Just Breathing. "Every time anybody asks, use it!" But we have a lot of influences. Everybody in the band [...] especially the guitar players, were super huge Thrice and Finch fans; and now everybody's into the phase where they're listening to metal or they're listening to Beloved (who's last show is today, unfortunately) everything from every different kind of music, because we figure that if we like it all and we can throw it all together, everybody knows how to play what's in front of them because we listen to so many different kinds of music. If that even remotely answers your question.... [Laughs]

SKRATCH: I think having diversity helps.

JAMES: Yeah. We have too many kinds of music on the road. We don't really dislike any type; we appreciate it all. A lot of people think that hardcore music is a stereotype even though that's not necessarily what we do! We get pigeonholed into being that or a Christian band because our name is "Glory of This"-[but our name] has absolutely nothing to do with [religion]. When we went on our first tour, every single band we played with every single day was a Christian band who wanted to get on the show, thinking we're a Christian band [...] We don't have anything negative to say [about Christianity], but that's definitely not the image we're trying to put out. [Our] name stands for itself.

SKRATCH: So that's the rumor you might wanna dispel, then? [Laughs] "We're NOT a Christian band." JAMES: A lot of people thought Indianola Records was a Christian label, so that made it even worse. [Indianola] actually put on their FAQ that they're not a Christian label-but some of their bands beg to differ. It's funny.

SKRATCH: All your different influences shape your sound, but do you think where you're from has anything to do with your sound at all?

JAMES: All we have is music and distribution for our influences. People in bigger cities like New York, Columbia (SC), Jacksonville, Atlanta-people who have a bigger music scene, have bands to look up to, they can use their experiences to help kinda mold them into

what they become-although [...] a lot of people become exactly what's around them. But we don't have that. [Laughs] We have woods...and a couple venues in our local town where bands privilege us by coming every once in a while. We don't have a very good music scene. Here, people pay five dollars, and they'll go stand outside and smoke cigarettes instead of coming in and watching the show. Everything we do is from what we've heard about. We know what we want, and that's all we strive to do. In other words, when we were to go out on tour, all we'd ever heard was that nobody's gonna come to shows; but when we went out on tour and kids were coming to the shows and supporting [the scene], we just realized where we're from is a really hard place to start a band. Us being out and trying to do what all our influences have done is our only real motivation we have to do something differently than everyone else around here. And it makes it hard, too, because the people in our area, rather than being supportive, have more of the attitude of "That should've happened to us." That makes it hard, but all we ever say is "All you guys have to do is record something and find someone who's interested in it. Get out there and do it. Live in a van with six other people-that's fun."

SKRATCH: What inspires your lyrics?

JAMES: Attitude, mood, the present situation in my life. If I'm in a bad mood one day, it probably means the song will wind up a lot more aggressive. I try and stray from the make-up/break-up songs that kinda overcome everything these days, because not only has it been said before, [but] if people wanna listen to that, they can listen to something else. I try to write [everything] without it being directly related to something. I try to make it more metaphorical so that you can relate it to anything. In other words, instead of saying I had a bad day, I make it sound like someone is having a bad day so that they can relate to the material. I have a bad problem, especially being the lyricist of a band, because whenever I listen to music, I don't even pay attention to the vocals. just because I listen to the way people sing it and not what they're

If I'm in a bad mood one day, it probably means the song will wind up a lot more aggressive.

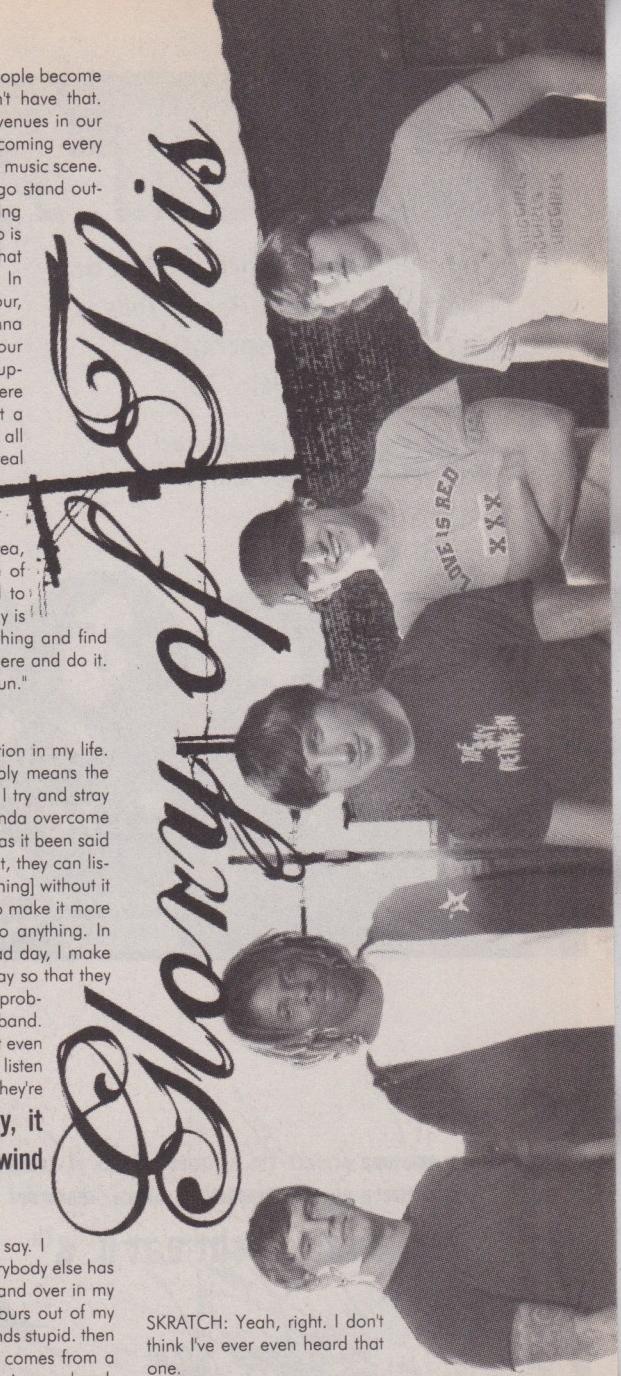
singing, because I have what I have to say. I don't wanna keep feeding off of what everybody else has already said. I listen to [our] music over and over in my head and write [lyrics] out, and it just pours out of my hand. And if I look back at it and if it sounds stupid, then I revise one or two things. But it all just comes from a spur of the moment, what thought is in my head. Sometimes I'll be driving and I'll think of this really great quote and just write it down on my hand or Post-It Notes (which keep me alive-they're everywhere); and by the end of the day, there's a song written, and all I've done is just thrown together everything I was thinking about, whether it's about people lying or trust or relationships.... It all just kinda comes out.

SKRATCH: I was just wondering: what's the song "Senior Superlative" about?

JAMES: The title came from me being completely independent in high school. I won the "Most Independent" award, which means absolutely shit! I think it's just because I had tattoos and piercings in high school. Everybody else [there] was in a rich, upper-class area, and they thought [I] was completely odd.

SKRATCH: Wait, wait, wait: "Most Independent"?! [Laughs] That could be seen as a loner, or...

JAMES: And to top it off, I walked into that meeting-the senior breakfast-late and [they] said I'd won an award right when I walked in. I walked in and said, "Most Independent?" and I looked around and said, "What the hell?"



SKRATCH: Yeah, right. I don't think I've ever even heard that one.

JAMES: I don't think anyone else has. And I didn't even get an award: I got a picture frame that said "Most Independent" on it-like they just threw that one in there. [Both laugh] The chorus, "How do you sleep at night," that's one of the songs written about me constantly. I don't think it's necessarily a confrontation thing, but I don't approach things really well whenever there's an argument or people arguing or fighting or there's a bunch of stress. I don't pay attention to it. It sucks-especially in my relationships-because I never flip out or scream or argue. And it's just about [how] people hold back a lot of things in their personal lives. Like, "How do you sleep at night? How do you live with yourself?"-why people do things and let it get to them. Honestly, I sleep well...when I get a chance. [Laughs]

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HALFWAYHOME
Interview by Tiffany Chow

If there was ever a band that deserved to achieve success purely based on their heart, efforts, and dedication, it would be Halfwayhome. For the past two years, Halfwayhome have spent themselves, touring exhaustively, recording a new album, and creating a cutting-edge yet approachable sound that is often hard to match in today's scene.

I had the opportunity to sit down with lead singer/guitarist Chas Smith. The highlights of our invigorating conversation follow.

SKRATCH: When you first started Halfwayhome, what were your initial goals?

CS: We wanted to make millions of dollars.

SKRATCH: [Laughs] And how's that going for you now?

CS: Quite well; it's happened several times over, and now we're bored! [Laughs] No, we never really set goals, just because we went into it not really knowing anything about the industry, and so it was kind of impossible to gauge what would happen. We just kind of figured, "Let's write good songs and see what happens!" We wanted to live off the band and stay on the road and not have to work outside jobs. Other than that, you don't want to set goals, because you could limit yourselves really easily. You could also set goals that are so outrageous that you're going to be disappointed.

SKRATCH: So even though you don't want to set goals for yourselves, what would be the one thing that would make you feel that you had made it?

CS: Even that's a tough call, because we've had some friends who have signed huge contracts with major labels, and their album didn't even come out. The label just said, "We don't like it. You're out. We're going to cut our losses at \$500,000 and send you packing." You just never know. It's the great unknown in this industry.

SKRATCH: Has there been a point so far that surprised you, that you thought you'd never get to (such as touring Europe)?

CS: Yeah, [touring Europe] was a little strange. That was before we really had a proper U.S. release. Actually, we went to Europe before we even toured the East Coast. We were flying up near Greenland, and we see the Eastern seaboard of the U.S., and we were like, "How are we over Greenland right now and we've never even been to New York as a band?!" That was pretty awesome. I'd like to do that again.

SKRATCH: Any plans in the works?

CS: To go back overseas? Not right now. It's enough work focusing on the United States. But I'd love to. We'd go back in a second.

SKRATCH: Do you even want to be "big" in the way the world gauges success?

CS: To where I would walk down the streets and not be able to...walk? [Laughs] I think [Adam from Taking Back Sunday] has a good level of fame. We were walking down Times Square, Adam and I and the three other guys from my band. He only got recognized like two or three times, and they were kids who, when you would look at them, you'd know they would know who Taking Back Sunday is. Otherwise, we passed like 500,000 people on the streets, and nobody recognized him. But if he goes to a show where people would know him, he couldn't even be in the crowd; he'd get mobbed. I guess that's good, because he can live a normal life, but he can't go to a show because he's big in that scene. Any more [fame] than that, I think, would be awesome for awhile, and then it'd just get old.

SKRATCH: Do you feel like you lead a different life now that Halfwayhome is your priority than you did when Halfwayhome didn't exist?

CS: I eat better when I'm home, because I enjoy healthy foods. When I'm on the road, I eat absolutely terrible. Sometimes people will cook you meals, but that's Ramen and macaroni and cheese. I drink a lot more caffeine on the road. I would say that the way I view certain people is different. The way that I would view other musicians is different, in that I am a little more critical [now] or I could be a little more jealous if it's somebody who is doing real well. Not that I would kill him or anything. [Laughs] Like, when I hang out with Adam, I think, "Wow, this guy has been blessed with an amazing level of success." In that respect, yes, but at the same time you try to ground yourself and be happy with where you are. Also, you meet a lot more people. You're in a different city every night, so your interactions are different, because you know that you're never going to see this person more than once or twice a year if you go back to that town. But I'd say that your friendships here are the same.

IT WAS A ROUGH TIME WHEN WE WERE WRITING THE ALBUM; IT WAS ROUGH FOR ME AND CHUCK.

SKRATCH: What would be the one thing that would make you give up the band?

CS: I think that the heavens would have to part and God would have to come down and say "You, out of Halfwayhome!" And I'd say "Yes, Sir!" But no, I don't have any other ambitions that would be so pressing that I would drop the band right now.

SKRATCH: Is Halfwayhome's sound what you thought it would be?

CS: It's kind of weird, because we recorded our album a year ago-and [...] we accomplished our goals and wrote the album that we were going for. But at this point if we recorded again, it probably wouldn't sound much the same. I think the next album will be a little bit different.

SKRATCH: What direction are you going in?

CS: On the last album, we kind of limited ourselves, because we went into it saying, "This is the sound we're going for." It kind of limited our songwriting. For the next album, I think we're just going to say, "Whatever we write and whatever are the best songs we have written are going on the album, whether it's 80 beats a minute or 200." Maybe we'll put some dance beats on there. [Laughs]

SKRATCH: What would you say the overall theme of A BRAND NEW SUBDIVISION is?

CS: It was a rough time when we were writing the album; it was rough for me and Chuck. His granddad had just passed away. He was pretty sick for a long time, a couple of years. We would visit every time we were back there and get to hang out with [Chuck's] grandparents. Chuck would go back quite a bit, and then [his grandfather] passed away. Then both my grandparents passed away within four months of each other. That just kind of came through on most of the album. We didn't set out to say, "Let's write a lyrically depressing, emotionally heavy album." That's not what we intended to do; but you sit down and you start writing, for some reason deeper emotions just come out.

SKRATCH: What would you say is your favorite track to play live and your favorite track technically?

CS: "For Tomorrow We Die" and "Four Months Until the Swarm" are two of my favorites, because they're both fun to play live and I think they're both well-written songs. And "Four Months Until the Swarm" was the one that was

specifically about my two grandparents dying four months apart. That one is kind of special for me, I guess. My mom cried! So I accomplished something there. [Laughs]

SKRATCH: What lies ahead for Halfwayhome?

CS: We're talking to some new guitar players right now. We have to have somebody by February 4th, because we go out on tour then with Moments in Grace and June (which is the new Victory Records band). That should be fun; we're excited for that. We get done with that, and then we go out with Before Today and Yesterday's Rising for about three weeks. Both are pretty much all West Coast [tours].

Find out when Halfwayhome is coming to your town via their Website, www.halfwayhomerock.com, or at www.thedeathscene.com.



halfwayhome

Instilled
By Sarah Laidlaw

Instilled started in 2001 as a side-project but quickly morphed into the main focus of its members. The band was signed to State of Mind Recordings in April 2004 and released their first album, *UNFINISHED BUSINESS*, shortly after. Instilled members fell in love with hardcore and punk music in their teens, and they haven't forgotten it. Their music is hardcore, plain and simple, which is what makes them so great. They aren't trying to create something brand new or keep up with the trends, or what genre is popular today. Their music is played straight from their heart and straight from their roots. It was, in effect, instilled in them from their youth.

SKRATCH: Why did you end up leaving the bands you were in originally for Instilled?

JESSE: The main reason we started Instilled was because we wanted to play the kind of punk/hardcore music we first got into when we were younger. Champ and I didn't like the other bands we were in, so we made Instilled our main priority.

SKRATCH: You have released one album thus far, *UNFINISHED BUSINESS*. Is it a good representation of who you guys are?

MATT: We are pretty stoked on it. We recorded it with Dean at Atomic in New York. Three of the

songs were on our demo before, and the others were written for the CD. These songs are a good representation of our sound. Our newer stuff that we are working on is heavier and sounds more like track 1 off the record, "To My Cellmate Revised".

SKRATCH: When do you think a second album will happen?

MATT: We are really stoked to do our next record. We are definitely a better band since *UNFINISHED BUSINESS*. We are already working on our full-length, but we'll be touring this summer. Hopefully we'll have it completed by the end of the year.

SKRATCH: What do you personally want to get out of being in this band?

MATT: There are a lot of things: traveling, meeting new people... And it's great having something you love to do with friends you love and getting a stage to tell what you believe while challenging people.

SKRATCH: How did you first get involved and interested in music?

JESSE: When I was 11 years old, I used to skate and read THRASHER. I bought a NOFX tape and a Black Flag tape from a pawn shop. I would check out THRASHER's bands of the month and buy their tapes. The first real hardcore record I bought was the New York Hardcore's *SUNDAY MATINEE* comp. I remember loving the late '80s New York

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laidcore stuff (i.e.g.,) Cro-mags, Judge, Killing Time, Leeway, and Breakdown. It had the best sounds, full of energy, and it was fucking pissed. It's really funny. Instilled and myself are still, to this day, influenced by those tapes.

SKRATCH: Why do you think your tastes evolved into the genre you play today?

MATT: I am 25 now and have been going to punk/hardcore shows since I was 15, so this is the style of music I have always been into.

SKRATCH: It's obviously hardcore, but how would you personally describe your music to someone who has never heard it before?

MATT and **JESSE:** Really, we had a lot of influence from '80s and early '90s hardcore—but most of all Motorhead.

SKRATCH: Do you agree with genre labels?

MATT: Yeah, we are a hardcore band. We love the core.

SKRATCH: Where have you toured so far?

MATT: We have toured all of the East Coast, a lot of Midwest, and all of the Southeast.

We are leaving in March to do a full U.S. tour with a band called Never Enough from Baltimore. We are very anxious to go to the West Coast, and hopefully in July we will be back again with Down to Nothing.

SKRATCH: Describe your favorite show that you've played.

MATT: There have been too many. We love playing for our hometown, Atlanta. The shows and the kids here are always great. There are a couple cities where we always have good shows, like Richmond, VA, and Daytona, FL.

"IT IS ABOUT BEING SMART AND QUESTIONING WHAT SOCIETY HAS INSTILLED INTO US, WHETHER IT IS ABOUT RELIGION, POLITICS, OR EVERYDAY LIFE."

SKRATCH: Does your band name have any particular meaning? What is instilled in you, your music, or the people who hear it?

JESSE: First off, it comes from the Chokerhold 7", INSTILLED. Basically, it is about being smart and questioning what society has instilled into us.

whether it is about religion, politics, or everyday life. It is not doing the regular, but doing what is right for you.

SKRATCH: Where do you see Instilled going in the future?

MATT: We plan on going everywhere, hopefully. We want to do this full-time, all the time. It's what we love.

Instilled's 7" of UNFINISHED BUSINESS will be released February. They will head out for tour in March, so check dates at www.stateofmindrecords.com.

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WE VS. THE
SHARK
By Brian Spiegel

To access the We vs. the Shark Website, you first have to click on a Robert Shaw quote from the movie JAWS: "Not with three bottles, he ain't," it says. This is appropriate, because the band's name is based on a quote from the movie. It's clear right away that this isn't your average "shark" band. We vs. the Shark is a four-piece from Athens, GA, home of The B-52's and REM. The band's new album, RUIN EVERYTHING, is a piece of indie bliss. Recorded entirely on analog equipment (another strike against Pro Tools, if you ask me), the album is both chaotic and beautiful. It's packed full of guitars, synth, and even a few horns sprinkled around here and there.

This interview was done a little differently than most. Due to crazy time constraints, e-mail interviews were done with both lead singer/guitarist Luke Fields and bassist/vocalist Jeffrey Tobias at different times. This might destroy most interviews, but I think these circumstances actually made this interview even better. Both band members have extraordinary senses of humor, which led to some rather entertaining answers. Highlights include a zombie band formation and even name-dropping of the legendary Hall & Oates. Once Hall & Oates enter a n

interview, you know you have a classic on your hands.

SKRATCH: Please identify yourself and which instrument you play.

LUKE: My name is Luke Fields. I do some singing and play a few kinds of guitar: I play your standard six-string, baritone guitar, and I have a specially-modified microtonal/fretless guitar that a friend built for me. JEFFREY: My name is Jeffrey Daniel Tobias. I play the bass guitar, keyboards, and "the mouth."

SKRATCH: There seems to be a lot of band names out there with the word "shark" in them. How did you decide on the name "We vs. the Shark"?

LUKE: The name was my idea. It was never really supposed to stick, though. It was an early prototype, and then we got local hype and couldn't really change it; we were already a name people knew. It originated from the movie JAWS, basically. I thought, "If I can be a part of something as elegant and bad-ass as Robert Shaw in JAWS, then I'll really be happy." And so it goes. Afterwards, of course, everyone made fun of us for being a "shark" band. And a "versus" band. And a "versus shark" band.

JEFFREY: Our name was devised by a crack team of market analysts and was then put before various subcommittees before being brought to the Hello Sir Records board of trustees for approval. Occasionally, we drink alcohol.

SKRATCH: How did the band form?

LUKE: I'm a zombie. I bit Sam, and she was a zombie. She bit Jeff, and then he was a zombie. Jeff bit Scott, and then Scott was a zombie. There

really weren't any other capable zombie musicians locally, so we really had no choice. We're a band out of necessity, not choice. Undead unite!

JEFFREY: The future members of We vs. the Shark were members of other bands from places with funny names like "Colorado" and "New York." We all met on coincidental tour jaunts and formed a long-distance bond, which later became a closer-distance bond. College classes were dropped, low-wage jobs were acquired, and the rest is history.

SKRATCH: Describe a typical live show for WVTS?

LUKE: We started out at house parties and never really grew out of them. We like the audience to participate—clapping, singing along. Bringing your own tambourine or maraca is good. Music is fun, but we also like entertainers. If we're bored, you're bored, so we don't do boring shows (whenever possible).

JEFFREY: Have you ever seen the part of OLD SCHOOL where Will Ferrell is debating James Carville and gives a stunning performance but afterwards remembers nothing? Very much like that, but with more equipment failures.

SKRATCH: Where is your favorite place to play?

LUKE: I like the Caledonia Lounge in Athens, GA.

JEFFREY: The Caledonia Lounge in Athens, GA, is cozy and employs a great deal of our friends. Out of town, we love DIY spaces like Cave 9 in Birmingham or places that give us good beer like DC 9 in Washington, DC. Any place with the number "nine" in the name, honestly.

SKRATCH:
Who are some of your influences (not just musically, but also stuff like politics, writing, movies, TV, etc.)?

LUKE: I can't speak for the whole band, but personally most of my influences are not very musical at all: Hunter S. Thompson, Shel Silverstein, Robert Shaw, Terry Gilliam, Tim Burton, Ralph Steadman, Johnny Depp, Kurt Vonnegut, Jon Stewart—a whole bag full of interesting chaps. Musically, there are too many people to name: Matt Mahaffey, Tom Waits, Rob Crowe, Erik Sanko, Danny Elfman, blah blah blah.

JEFFREY: Luke is a fan of dark, curious people things like Ralph Steadman, Tim Burton, and monster trucks. Sam gets a great deal of her inspiration from home-design reality shows on TLC. Scott plays something called World of Warcraft, which is either a video game or some sort of wimpy version of Russian roulette (I haven't determined which). I listen to a lot of Prince and do a lot of laundry.

SKRATCH: What kind of music are you guys listening to right now?

LUKE: I'm listening to Danny Elfman, Heavy Vegetable, Archers of Loaf, Disband, and So Many Dynamos.

JEFFREY: Scott has been obsessing over The Pixies as if he's the first person to have dis-



{ WE VS. THE SHARK }



covered them; Luke and Sam have been enjoying a lot of Heavy Vegetable. As for me, I reiterate: Prince.

SKRATCH: Who is your favorite band?

LUKE: There is no such thing as my favorite band. JEFFREY: Accept no imitations: Hall & Oates.

SKRATCH: It's interesting to hear an album with both a male and female lead singer. Did you guys start out with the idea of having two lead singers, or did it just developed that way?

JEFFREY: Actually, we have three singers. We're all big fans of Fugazi and have always enjoyed their multiple-vocalist approach. Also, none

of us feel we have a strong-enough voice to carry the vocal duties 100% of the time. We like to divide them up neatly between "awful," "cringe-inducing," and "barely passable."

SKRATCH: Do you think that having a female singer makes you stand out in the music world?

JEFFREY: Sam's role in the band is less "vocal" and more "merch girl with a guitar." (Please don't print that or she'll hit me. [Writer's note: Sorry, but it was too good not to print.]

SKRATCH: Who did the artwork on your album?

JEFFREY: A gentleman from Colorado named Chris Lehman was kind enough to take care of that for us. His portfolio can be found at www.weareattack.com.

SKRATCH: I love the combination of mellowness and chaos on this record. How did you decide on the sound for this record?

JEFFREY: It wasn't very premeditated. Once we wrote our 10th or 11th song, [there was] an unspoken understanding that it was time to document them. As for the dynamics on the record, that's just how we do. We get bored very easily and mix it up as much as possible.

SKRATCH: "Slide" is an awesome song. I love the hodge-podge of instruments on it. Do you think that the inclusion of synths and horns bring a new level and texture to the music?

JEFFREY: We hope so! It just seemed like a fun quirk to add. Fun fact: Robbie, the French horn player, used to play with Neutral Milk Hotel and has a mullet. No lie!

S K R A T C H :
Anything you would like to add?

JEFFREY: Thanks for interviewing us, and please e-mail us food.

Wow. Even I, a seasoned journalist, had to laugh my ass off at some of those answers. "Funny names like 'Colorado' [...]" —that's hilarious! Anyway, We vs. the Shark plays with great frequency in and around the Georgia area, but hopefully they will head out west soon. The band's new album, RUIN EVERYTHING, is out now on Hello Sir Records. Check the band out if you have a chance—you won't be disappointed. Oh yeah, and e-mail them food, if you can.

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the lane next to me decided to make a fun turn into the front side of my car. That was annoying, to say the least.

SKRATCH: Do you music publications?

TRISTAN: I pick up ALTERNATIVE PRESS every once and while. But for the most part, no, not really. I'd rather find a band on my own than have someone tell me about them.

SKRATCH: Really?

TRISTAN: Yeah. On MySpace, right? But that's another thing about us: weird.

TRISTAN: Yeah. On man. My friend Lauren got me into it, and now we're so addicted to it. Mark used to hate it, but now he's addicted to it, as well. It definitely sucks you in.

SKRATCH: What's in your CD player right now?

TRISTAN: Colossal. I listen to WELCOME THE PROBLEMS at least once a day.

SKRATCH: Do you drive to Wisconsin every day?

TRISTAN: Yeah. I minute drive—which isn't terrible, but when you broke and someone just ran into your car on New Year's Eve, you don't mind doing that every morning.

SKRATCH: Someone over that when I got the idea

TRISTAN: Yeah. I mind doing that every morning.

SKRATCH: Someone behind that?

TRISTAN: Originally, the finish on cover booklet was supposed to be a matte finish and not a glossy finish, so you could actually write on the cover with the pencil showing up if they accidentally printed them glossy or if they matted. They ended up coming back as glossy, and we were like, "Doh!" It didn't work out like we wanted it to.

SKRATCH: Like a take

TRISTAN: Yeah. I hope so.

SKRATCH: That was a dumb question.

TRISTAN: This girl, Abby Nelson, and I went to preschool together. It actually wasn't even a real preschool. We learned stuff, but it was at a lady's house.

SKRATCH: A daycare center?

TRISTAN: Yeah, it was weird; it was two preschoolers who had this weird crush thing on each other. Our parents thought it would be a fun idea to dress us up and everything while I think back on how ridiculous that was. That's a pretty random fact.

SKRATCH: Is there anything that you would like to say to the readers?

TRISTAN: Yeah, does anyone in the Midwest have a place where we could stay?

SKRATCH: Oh yeah—you're going to tour.

TRISTAN: Yeah, we're going out on a 10-day tour. But we want to start getting out as much as we can. We have big ambitions without being too big, but we definitely want to do this with our lives. We've seen so much support, and it's really humbling. We've been feeling, and I love doing it a lot.

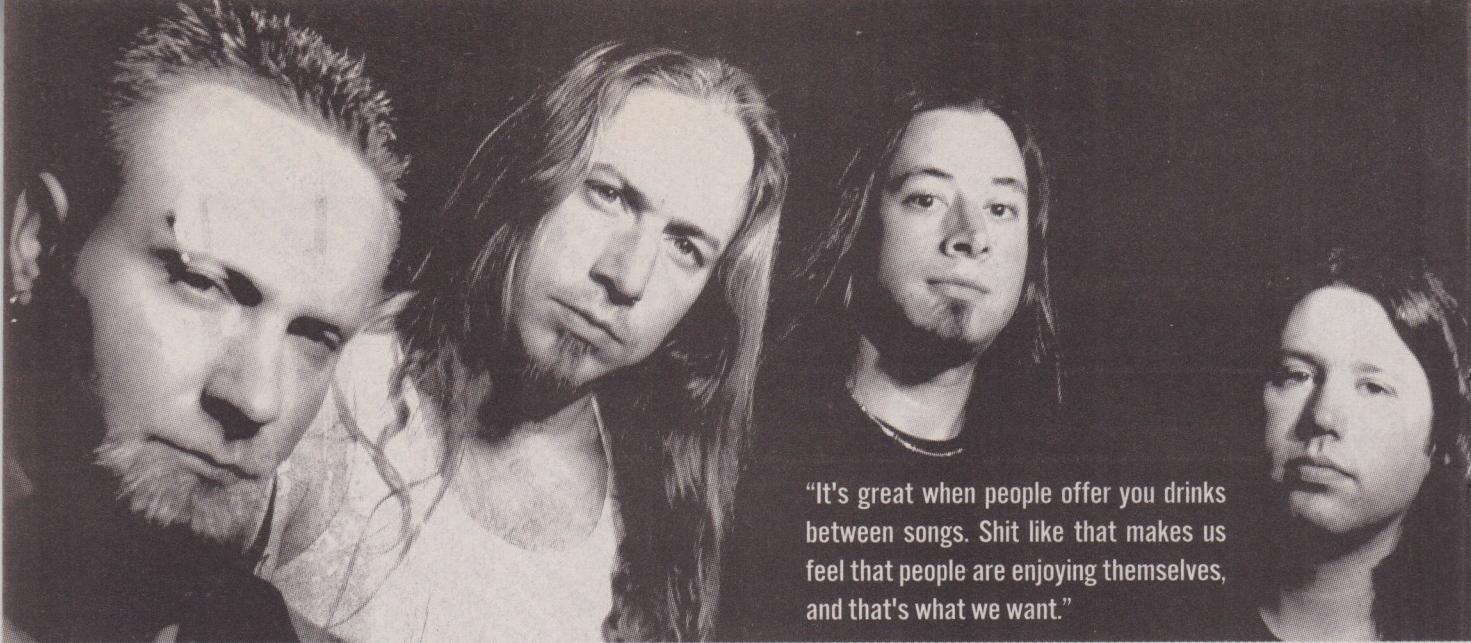
SKRATCH: I like your CD, by the way.

TRISTAN: Thank you very much. It's really weird, because we're all so bad at taking compliments. I always feel really awkward—but it's cool nonetheless.

More information and mp3s can be found at www.thefelixculpa.com. Or if you're an "internet geek" (as Tristan put it), add them onto your friends list at myspace.com/thefelixculpa.

WE'RE STRANGELY PICKY, FOR SOME REASON





SINGLE BULLET THEORY

By Sarah Laidlaw

Philadelphia-based metal band Single Bullet Theory has toured the U.S. seven times in the past two years since their debut album, *ROUTE 666*, was released, playing with the likes of Killswitch Engage, Soilwork, Hypocrisy, and Entombed. They now have two albums out on Crash Music, the most recent titled *BEHIND EYES OF HATRED*.

Single Bullet Theory was named for the idea that one single incident can change a person's entire life. When I asked the band if there was such an incident in their own lives, they refused to talk about it. However, they did talk with me via e-mail about their music, their band, and their goals. Read our conversation to delve a little further into this band's consciousness.

SKRATCH: What swayed you towards playing metal?
BILL: W.A.S.P.'s *THE LAST COMMAND*. That record changed my life forever. My brother was always into the "metal" stuff. I always thought a lot of it was too light and cheesy. One day, I heard the W.A.S.P. stuff and was drawn to the scary image and lyrics. I decided to look into bands like Iron Maiden and Judas Priest and eventually ended up with a Slayer record.

BILL: When I moved back to the U.S. (having grown up overseas) in 1989, I had a difficult time adjusting to the normal way of life for a kid here, as my experiences [growing up] were rather different. The only group of kids I was able to become friends with were ones like myself: kids who didn't seem to "fit in." Since we were different, so was the music we listened to. Most of my friends were already listening to metal, and you know how that goes: you become like your friends. There was just something about that music that made me feel good. It was cool to be different—and that's really what metal is geared towards.

SKRATCH: How would you define SBT's music?
BILL: I guess you could fit it in with the new wave of American metal. We also have aspects of death metal, power metal, and some black metal in our sound. We've seen that fans of all these genres can enjoy listening to us and have fun watching us perform live. We feel that we mix it up well.

SKRATCH: A lot of your lyrics seem to look into the human psyche. Tell me a little more about your lyrics.
MATT: When I write, it's always been "extrospective": I write about other people's bullshit. Lately I have been trying to pen some introspective shit. We will see how the next SBT album unfolds.

SKRATCH: What do you hope to achieve with SBT?
BILL: As most of you know, we do what we do so that we can get out on the road and tour. That is really where our efforts show the biggest return. We would love to someday be able to tour as a headliner and sell out, let's say, a 600-seater with our own fans. Not much to ask for, right? With the right help, we can do it.

SKRATCH: What defines a good show for SBT?
BILL: Well, since we always get stuck with the opening slot, a good show starts out with people getting in the door early. [Laughs] Our energy level is almost always 100%, so, really, we just have to get out there and play our asses off. If the crowd is responding well to key points in the set, it just makes us work that much harder up there. It's great when people offer you drinks between songs. Shit like that makes us feel that people are enjoying themselves, and that's what we want.

SKRATCH: What is it like to tour with such well-respected bands as Killswitch Engage and Entombed?
BILL: It's just a damn good time. You really see how down to earth most of these guys are. When you're on the road, everybody supports each other 100%. There is a level of respect that everyone has for each other. We enjoy watching the other bands kick ass out there every night—as they do us. It's a big party, and everyone is invited.

MATT: Also, as luck would have it, we toured with Killswitch Engage before they were big, when they were as unknown as us. They deserve everything they are getting. They are a killer band.

SKRATCH: It sounds like you guys are constantly touring. What is your motivation behind this, and why do you feel it is important?

BILL: We basically feel that if you're not going to tour as much as you can, then there is no reason to do this at all. You need to get out there and show the country,

"It's great when people offer you drinks between songs. Shit like that makes us feel that people are enjoying themselves, and that's what we want."

or world, what you're all about. I mean, touring is the highlight of it all. All the hard work at home makes it like our vacation. We wish we could do it more often.

SKRATCH: This is your second album. Has your musicianship changed a lot from the first? How?

BILL: I think we have raised the bar a bit in certain respects. There was much more focus on vocals and melody lines. Matt worked hard on his solos on this one. The presence of James Murphy during the recording process made all of us better players, for sure. I know that Matt and I are really looking forward to the next album, as both Jay and Carlos ([i.e.,] our new drummer and guitarist) will be on it. They're both monster players, so we are ready to take this band to the next level.

SKRATCH: How many more albums do you see SBT making?

BILL: Well, I don't want to shoot ourselves in the foot and put a time frame on anything. I think we will keep at it for as long as we can. As long as people accept us and as long as we can tour, there's no stating how long it will go.

MATT: Well, for this label, we'll see. I think we need to get off of it and have a fresh start with a label that actually has the potential to really take the band places.

SBT hope to record their third video in the near future, as well as possibly get their music in an independent film and a video game. They will be touring throughout March with Amorphis, Into Eternity, and Beyond the Embrace. Visit www.singlebullettheory.net to learn more.

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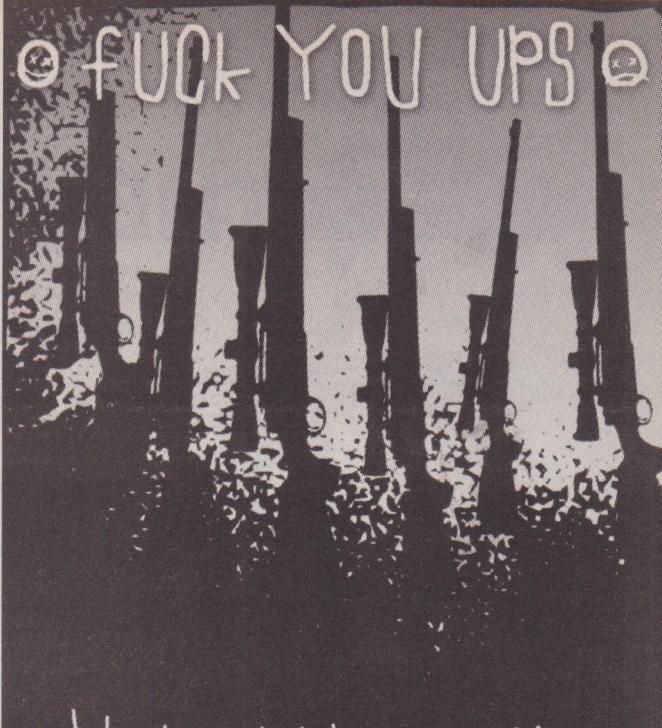
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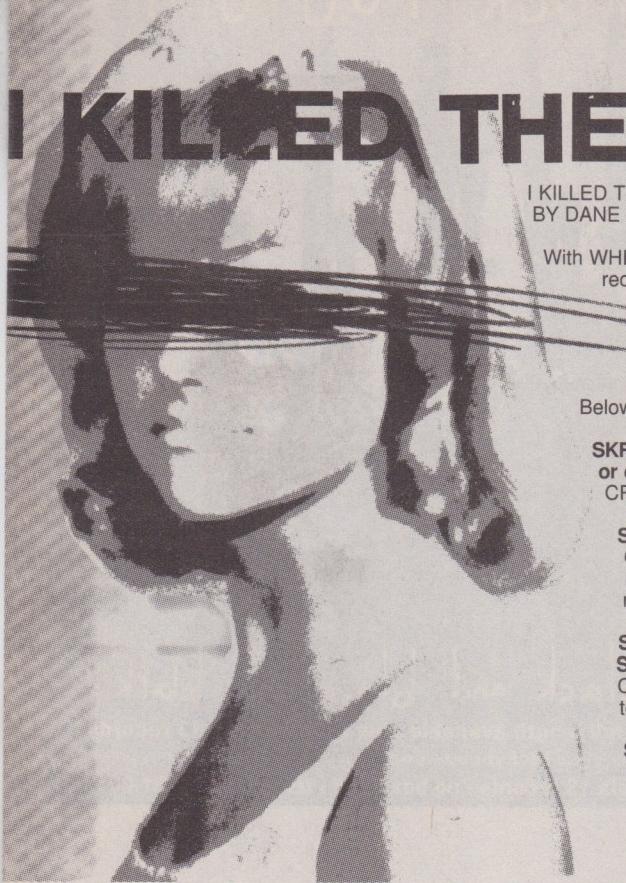
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I KILLED THE PROM QUEEN

I KILLED THE PROM QUEEN
BY DANE JACKSON

With WHEN GOODBYE MEANS FOREVER..., Adelaide's I Killed the Prom Queen has finally received some exposure on American soil. This exposure also led to a tour with Evergreen Terrace. IKTPQ isn't just your ordinary hardcore band, as these Aussies have been able to combine technical intricacies with melody and pure aggression. The musicianship is the shell for heartfelt lyrics about relationships and other social issues. If you're looking for a new hardcore band to add to your rotation, look no further.

Below is my interview with lead singer Michael Crafter.

SKRATCH: Is your band's name social commentary on the whole high-school experience, or do you just really hate prom queens?

CRAFTER: Ummm, I just thought of it, and we went with it. It's a catchy name.

SKRATCH: What is it about hardcore music that has drawn you to it?

CRAFTER: There is a lot of power and energy behind the music. I think the kids also make me stoked on being in a hardcore band. I think going to shows and playing shows make me really happy—so that's why I'm so stoked on it.

SKRATCH: How excited are you that your music is finally getting recognized in the States?

CRAFTER: So stoked. Like, we didn't think we would be getting anywhere, but we have toured with some of our favorite bands, so it's amazing for us.

SKRATCH: Was it hard to break in to the scene here?

CRAFTER: Yeah, it was, because no one had heard of us at all. We are still really young, so it freaked us out a bit. Lots of kids seemed into it, so it made us happy.

SKRATCH: What are you looking forward to most about your upcoming tour here?

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Jeannine Nucci from the Dark City © 1998 Miramax Films

"MY BAND KILLED A KANGAROO WITH A CAR. THOSE THINGS AIN'T COOL."

CRAFTER:

Ummm, we are coming out there in the summer, I think. We wanna see our friends and party. Oh yeah, and play shows, mosh, and have some fun.

SKRATCH: What about the least?

CRAFTER: Driving. And no vegan food.

SKRATCH: Since it's hard for a lot of us to hear about Australian bands, what bands should we seek out?

CRAFTER: Miles away, Last Nerve, Parkway Drive, and Her Nightmare.

SKRATCH: Are there any stereotypes about Aussies that you'd like to dispel for the readers?

CRAFTER: My band killed a kangaroo with a car. Those things ain't cool. They are stupid and ran in front of our tour van.

SKRATCH: Do bands like 30 Odd Foot of Grunt give Australian music a bad name?

CRAFTER: Man, don't talk about that shit. That band sucks. Jet fucking sucks. Actually, we came third to Jet in the Australian Recording Artist Awards in Australia. I guess we didn't sound rock enough.

SKRATCH: When listening to your new record, is there a specific moment or song that makes you extremely proud of it?

CRAFTER: The mosh, always the mosh parts.

SKRATCH: What was the hardest thing about recording?

CRAFTER: Long days and nights. It makes you really stressed.

SKRATCH: Is Fosters really Australian for beer?

CRAFTER: [Laughs] Not sure. I'm straight-edge. I drink Pepsi.

SKRATCH: Give me an outsider's take on our government and how it's handled the situation with Iraq.

Do people from your country think we're morons for reelecting Bush?

CRAFTER: I really try and block it out. I think money is really the power, and that dude has loads of money behind him—so maybe that helps him a lot. I think [Bush and co.] have taken over a country and done nothing for the place...but I just try and ignore it all.

SKRATCH: In 10 words or less, convince the reader to come check you out this summer.

CRAFTER: Ummm, we have mosh parts, we have cool accents, and I have small teeth.

Until getting the chance to see I Killed the Prom Queen live this summer, get your fix at www.ikilledthepromqueen.com.



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FRANKENSTEIN
By Sarah Laidlaw

Frankenstein has survived in their 19 years with a few scrapes and scratches in the form of line-up changes, a member's death, and bad reputations-all of which they have overcome. But amazingly, Frankenstein has not, until now, released a full-length album. Their first full-length, AN UGLY DISPLAY OF SELF-PRESERVATION, represents material from Dave Grave's (vocals) almost entire musical career, from "Flesh Garage" (written in '79 with his first band, Voodoo Church (then Zombie Legion)) through the recent years.

I chatted with Dave, Bart Sinister (bass), Tommy Marseilles (guitar), and L. Ron Jeremy (guitar) online, and they told me some of their thoughts and stories on their horror-punk music and lives.

SKRATCH: Frankenstein has had quite an extensive history. What have been some of the high points in that time?

DAVE: The history of this band reads like the brain scan of a grand mal seizure. Over the years, there's been an armed standoff or two: the time Ike Turner showed up to check us out in San Diego, playing Vegas, working with the Reverend Whitey Peckwood and all the other people who've been in this band, FINALLY finishing the album, playing in a fish restaurant, having the album released on CD AND green vinyl, and pimping Frankenstein in Europe! Hearing yourself played on a jukebox or the radio is still kind of strange.

BART: Releasing the album and touring it in Europe.

SKRATCH: And the low points?

DAVE: The death of our first drummer in '85 nearly killed the band before it got started. Previous line-ups have fallen apart when certain members turned control freak or put their own agendas before the best interests of the band. The personal bullshit level got too high, and the monster's limbs just rotted off. There was a record label I had some problems with, but they honored their contract two weeks before it went to court. A club in Texas screwed us out of \$800, delaying the album's release for months. Losing the Reverend

Whitey Peckwood. Getting really sick on tour was no picnic, either, but we didn't cancel a show.

BART: Playing the fish restaurant!

SKRATCH: To what do you attribute Frankenstein remaining a band for so long?

DAVE: Pure spite and stubbornness, belief in the quality of the material, and having nothing better to do.

BART: Good music, great friends, and good beer.

TOMMY: Plenty of access to beer and cigarettes.

SKRATCH: How has your music changed over the years?

DAVE: The only real change I can think of would be the input of the various guitarists I've worked with. The music has always drawn on a variety of styles, but the darker influences and themes have always been constant. Maybe the material has grown a little more sarcastic and bitter. I'm a strong advocate of "no escapism."

SKRATCH: I know you recently toured Europe. How is touring over there different from in the U.S.?

DAVE: The scene in Europe is far more mixed than here, a lot less genre-specific. We still confuse the more goth-obsessed, but their numbers are shrinking as the return to a harder death rock continues. The promoters are MUCH more honest there than here and see to it that the bands are fed and have decent places to stay. They don't screw the bands just to make themselves more money. Great clubs, great people, great food, and great beer!

JEREMY: I think European audiences are more appreciative of music and the arts. They will travel for 10 hours to see a band, even if they have never heard their music. In the U.S.-at least on the West Coast-it's hard to get people to drive for 20 minutes to see a show...unless, of course, it's Frankenstein.

BART: It all comes down to the beer!

TOMMY: Everyone but the driver can drink in the van, and you can smoke everywhere. European audiences have a definite interest in the music. People who did not speak any English were singing along to our songs phonetically.

SKRATCH: I know your shows are pretty crazy. Can you describe them to me?

DAVE: I've never seen one of our shows. Once the music starts, I go into convulsions, and by the time I regain consciousness, the band's done! I always have to wait to see the video. Pretty repulsive, from what I've seen.

JEREMY: No, you have to experi-

ence them for yourself.

BART: Good ole rock 'n' roll!

TOMMY: Only those who experienced it and lived to tell can say. Patrick Seguin wrote a review of a Frankenstein show in Prague. To quote him: "And what a rampage-the kind that grabs you by the skull and slams you giddy off the surfaces of rooms in a cartoon haunted house and leaves you begging for more [...]" Fuck genres and sub-genres, Frankenstein is pure high-octane 160-proof lock-up-your-daughters, wives, and sons rock 'n' roll [...]" Frankenstein is a souped-up bitchin' Camaro leading God's cops on a high-speed chase down, you got it, the Highway to Hell-and back." I'm not sure what all of that means, but I think he enjoyed the experience.

SKRATCH: What do you think you would be doing if you were not in a band?

DAVE: Trying to start a band or staging coups in third world nations. There's not that much difference.

JEREMY: Turning up daisies.

BART: I'd probably be in jail!

TOMMY: I would own a string of bait shops all over the world. I would become the best-a master, if you will-in the art of bait. We would supply to customers all over the world. Because of our expertise, the stores would be called "the Master Bait Shop." Customers could call in at 1-800-MASTERBAIT or log onto our Website at www.masterbait.com.

SKRATCH: Any plans for the future?

DAVE: More recording, and trying to convince more people to enlist in the Frankenstein legion. World conquest is only a burst eardrum away!

JEREMY: Touring Europe in the spring after a new release in a couple of months.

BART: More of the same!

TOMMY: Release our next album; tour the U.S., Europe, and Asia; skydive naked; drink Newcastle....

AN UGLY DISPLAY OF SELF-PRESERVATION was released in August of this year, and Frankenstein has been continually touring to support it. Check out www.frankensteinintheband.com for more gory details.

“The history of this band
reads like the brain scan
of a grand mal seizure”

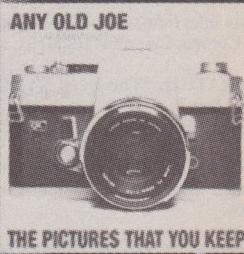


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THE DEEP EYNDE
By Marcus Solomon

Just in time for Halloween! Well, consider it VERY EARLY for next year's Halloween. Here we have the slightly eerie and very charismatic vocalist Fate Fatal as he leads us and his creepy cohorts into the fun-filled world of dark caves, bats, vampire blood, monster movies, and hot chicks galore. Having evolved into a better dark-rock band rather than remaining a relatively ordinary goth act, The Deep Eynde now puts the emphasis on ROCK rather than ACT. The theatrical, dark image is still an intrinsic part of this ghoulish group, but the music now has a faster, harder, rock 'n' roll quality that better suits Fatal's deep, rich voice. Dave Vanian of The Damned, beware! The new album SHADOWLAND is a quick-tempo venture into the land of swirling mists, power chords, surfish riffs, deep and pulsating bass, ritualistic drums, and silly-serious evil lyrics. Dive into The Deep Eynde!

Fate Fatal—vocals
Hal Satan—drums
Sean Vomit—bass
Daniel DeLeon—guitar

This interview was conducted at the Showcase Theatre in Corona, CA, on 9/16/04.

SKRATCH: "The Deep EYNDE." Why is it spelled that way?

FATE: Because we got sued by another band.

SKRATCH: Where are they now?

FATE: They are, ummm...one of those bands from the '60s.

SKRATCH: You got sued by 60-year-old hippies?

FATE: Who drive Range Rovers, Hummers, and shit like that.

SKRATCH: Anyway, Duane Peters fell in love with your band, picked you up, and now he calls you his "graveyard Elvis" because you get all the girls WET.

FATE: Um, I gotta get back to you on that. I'm not sure how "wet" that is—but let me check the precipitation.

SKRATCH: How long has The Deep Eynde been a band?

FATE: Officially, five years. Before that, we were kind of on crack and whatever, but we started getting our shit together about five years ago. We had a couple of releases in Germany, so this year we went on tour in Germany and New York. When we came back, we got signed to Disaster Records.

SKRATCH: How did you get the money for Europe?

FATE: [Europeans] have such a thirst for the music, especially American music. The club brought us out with the promoters. We went to Belgium, and England and...

SKRATCH: Did they just say, "Would you like to come to Europe? I will pay your way."

FATE: Yeah. We probably sold like a thousand dollars [worth] at the merchandise booth before we went on. That's a good indication to all bands who get let down [in the U.S.] who are trying to hook up to go to Europe.

SKRATCH: The Skulls told me that in Europe, the people really appreciate the bands more. Why do you think that is?

FATE: It's cultural.

SKRATCH: Culture there, or the lack of culture here in America?

FATE: I don't think America has the attention span.

SKRATCH: [Deliberate long pause] Huh?

FATE: [Laughs] Like how you can be talking to someone, and in the middle of your sentence, they will just bust out their cell phone.

SKRATCH: [Laughs] How did you hook up with Duane and Disaster Records?

FATE: He found our CD in a stack; and then Josh from the label came to the show and he reviewed the band. He then reported back to Duane, and while this was going on, we were already on a compilation. He was blown away by it and later realized that we have a really thick history with the underground scene. We've toured the U.S. four times.

SKRATCH: Do you have a day job? If so, what do you do?

FATE: I am a party promoter. I was doing a club for awhile called "Hollywood Babylon." It was all old-school stuff, before [L.A. radio station] 103.1 FM was around. It's funny that now 103.1 is playing all that old shit.

SKRATCH: It's like KROQ was 20 years ago. I'm wondering how long it's going to last, because when the money comes, things change.

FATE: Yeah, but you have to kind of savor it.

SKRATCH: What has The Deep Eynde released thus far?

FATE: We have two releases on a German label, Apollyon. Two there, and a vinyl release. This new one [SHADOWLAND] is the first American release.

SKRATCH: How would someone get one of the German releases?

FATE: You have to go to the Website: [www.apollyon.de].

SKRATCH: Is there a working theme for the new album?

FATE: Yeah: the city is dead.

SKRATCH: What? Is this some contrived goth band?

FATE: No. We used to be very much that tone, but we are growing up and we are coming out of that. Everything [now] is a lot faster and more of rock 'n' roll, old-school tone.

SKRATCH: Is the band now accumulating more of a fan base?

FATE: It's less than before, because we are starting to change and shift. It used to be specifically gothic people, and now its kind of rock 'n' roll.

SKRATCH: Are your old fans resentful?

FATE: I don't care. Maybe, I don't think you should be zoned in on one scene, because anybody who hasn't heard of Johnny Cash or X is losing out.

SKRATCH: What do you listen to for your personal enjoyment? Zeppelin?

FATE: No.

SKRATCH: How can you not like Zeppelin?

FATE: I mean, that I'm not really listening to them that much. Well, if it was on and I was beating off or whatever, then I would just let it go. Fucking to Zeppelin is...I'm sure it's great.

SKRATCH: Did you experience any "Bush resentment" while overseas?

FATE: That was a big problem on tour, the way we were treated by some of the people [because of them] knowing that we were from the U.S.

SKRATCH: Mike of The Stitches told me that the Europeans seem to lump all Americans together as supporters of the fascist Bush regime.

FATE: Especially in England.

SKRATCH: The British population was 80% against the invasion of Iraq, and it's probably 90% now. What are your thoughts about the current political and world situation?

FATE: I'd rather kill myself...I think.

SKRATCH: Are you going to vote?

FATE: YES!

SKRATCH: And you are voting against...?

FATE: Against myself. It's just a fucked-up, no-win situation.

SKRATCH: Do you ever make political statements in your songs?

FATE: Very subliminally, yes. I try not to get too much into it, because I get bent and upset.

SKRATCH: What do you prefer to write about?

FATE: Revenge.

SKRATCH: In the actual sense or the metaphorical sense?

FATE: Some very descriptive, some metaphorical, some pretty much straight up "I wanna kill you."

SKRATCH: You're not advocating murder?

FATE: Umm...I don't know.

SKRATCH: NO! But do you know who died yesterday [i.e., 9/15/04]?

FATE: Yeah: Johnny Ramone. That was weird, because they just had that tribute for them on Sunday.

SKRATCH: I think he held on so that he could have his last hurrah. I'm sure you listened to The Ramones when you were a kid.

FATE: All the time!

SKRATCH: How did you make the decision to become a musician in the vocal sense? What made you want to get up and sing and perform for people?

FATE: I think I was the only one who wanted to get up and scream [among] my group We grew up in Hollywood, started practicing in the garage, doing acid.... Man, acid was good back in the day.

SKRATCH: Do you think that experience expanded your consciousness?

FATE: Oh yeah, totally.

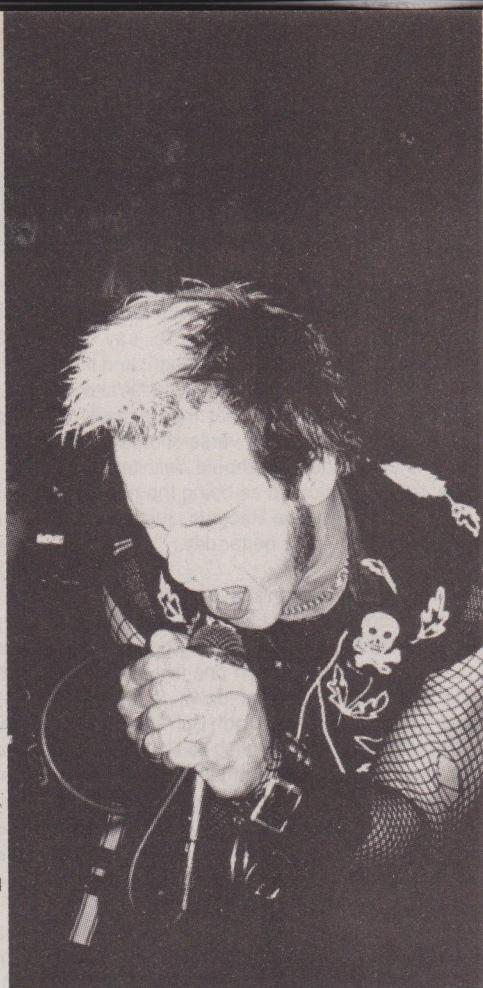
SKRATCH: When you are in that other realm, you still choose a path.

FATE: Yeah. I definitely think everyone should trip at least once.

SKRATCH: Even grandmas?

FATE: They should have tripped when they were younger.

SOME PRETTY MUCH STRANGE UP THERE
SOME METAPHORICAL SOME
SOME DESCRIPTIVE SOME



SKRATCH: Having expanded your mind, I'm sure you are aware that every day is a new...

FATE: Oh yeah, I'm totally aware. I think about life and death every day.

SKRATCH: Are you aware of the "eternal now"?

FATE: "Eternal now"? No, I'm not familiar with that.

SKRATCH: The past doesn't exist, the future is a theory, so the only thing that exists is the present moment.

FATE: I could see that.

SKRATCH: [Abruptly] "THE DEEP EYNDE"! That reminds me of an empty pool. You should skate.

FATE: I should, but I got hit by a bus.

SKRATCH: Did you almost die or have a near-death experience?

FATE: [Laughs] No, I just woke up in the middle of the street. The bus ran over the skateboard; it was in pieces. But the thing that got fucked up the most was my wrist. My head's okay because it's all bouncy and shit.

SKRATCH: Try using glucosamine.

FATE: What's that?

SKRATCH: It is the specific sugar that the body uses to produce tendons, ligaments, and other connective tissue. It also helps minimize the pain.

FATE: [Holds up his beer] Does this have glucosamine in it?

SKRATCH: No.

FATE: [Laughs]

The new full-length CD, SHADOLAND, shreds, and it is now available in stores everywhere. Check out the band and order merchandise via the Internet at: www.deepeynde.com—or Duane Peters will kick you in your little bat balls.

Music-Skate-Wake-Snow-Lifestyle

DISS rider Aaron aka "Tornado"

b

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SHOW REVIEWS

Prima Donna Comprehend The Wargasms Vinyl Issue The Machetes

January 7, 2005
@ CIA (North Hollywood, CA)
By Yuri Beatnick

Driving around the streets of Burbank, I officially award the CIA the hardest venue to find. It took me almost a half-hour to find something that looks like one of those crazy novelty museums. With only a small unlit sign and big bushes covering the entire venue, it's almost impossible to see. Anyway, once there, the damn thing didn't open until two hours after when it should have, leaving bands and fans out in the rain waiting. Was this the worst part of the night? Hell no! I didn't even review the show yet!

First, I learned that The Machetes canceled their set, which was a huge damper on the night. However, this meant that Vinyl Issue got to go on first. Vinyl Issue is an absolutely amazing band. Coming from the Orange County area, they play surf-induced garage punk that you could only find in the 1980s section of your favorite record store. Most of the songs just make you want to get up and start skating...but not this night. Tonight, their performance was sloppy, mainly due to the new guitarist, who hasn't been fully broken in yet. But they did play MY favorite song, "Lust", so, all in all, it was a decent set. At the end, they gave away a bunch of CDs that don't work, so you'll just have to wait to buy their upcoming releases.

Next was The Wargasms, also coming from the Orange County area. Before I get to their set, The Wargasms are taking a page right out of Slash Records by taking it upon themselves to record and release local unsigned bands on a label they started called Hot Tub Sluts. The Machetes and Vinyl Issue are among some of these bands, and they are releasing their first comp very shortly. You may be listening to it right now as you read this review. Anyway, as for their performance, you would think these kids are mentally retarded. Singer KO does nothing but roll around on the floor, taking anything down with him; and guitarist Andy Hotpants smashes his guitar into everything—including the singer—with total disregard for how the songs sound. Although the bass player and drummer are right on, The Wargasms play sloppy and unorganized, which leads to a bad show. After seeing KO and Andy destroy their own set, I couldn't stop laughing when

KO tried to get serious and talk about politics, because at this point no one was listening or caring about what he had to say. The Wargasms are entertaining, though, and if you were fortunate to get their single "Wake Up Today", you would see that they actually do have songs in standard verse/chorus format. This is one band you should definitely try to see; they ARE quoted as being the next band to make it by Hostage Records. Just hope that you catch them on a better day.

Finally, the first organized band of the night, Comprehend. Another Hot Tub Slut band, they are from Whittier. Playing fast, high-octane skate punk, Comprehend put on one fine show...until the bass player stripped down to his boxer shorts. I was just mortified! But Comprehend plays fast, well, and they bring back an old sound that has certainly been forgotten. However, as the set list goes on, all the songs start to sound the same. I could've sworn they played the same songs a couple of times in a row. They DID play "Suicide" to start off the set and to conclude it. All around, a good set for Comprehend.

Now the show took a turn for the worst, as some other bands started to play that were not on the roster (at least I didn't know about them). Alex and His Droogs played, and they were absolutely horrible; and then there was some band I have no idea about. They played mostly covers—and STILL managed to suck. If you are in that band and reading this right now, hoping to impress that girl you're with, sorry, but you guys were awful!

Finally, saving my ears from anymore crude music, Prima Donna came on with high energy and good tunes. Lead by the illustrious Kevin Preston (you may know him from The Skulls), Prima Donna bring back the glam sound that pre-dated punk rock, but they fit it in so nicely you won't even notice it's there the first time you listen to it. Kevin does a sensational job of keeping the crowd going, and all the ladies came out for this one, including Texas Terri herself! Their record is coming out soon, but for now you'll have to settle for their demo, "Stray Doll". Do make sure you give this band a listen or two, because soon they'll be everywhere!

THE BRIGGS ANGEL CITY OUTCASTS LEFT ALONE THE SCUFFS

January 7, 2005
@ the Knitting Factory (Hollywood, CA)
By Trashcan Mike

Here's a great lineup to kick off the New Year. I got inside the venue just as The Scuffs started to rip the crowd a new one

with some old-fashioned blistering three-chord street punk. Guitarist Cary and bass player Hank equally contribute youthful melodies and yells of angst and rebellion. Combine them with Jim's street beat, and you have a great recipe for timeless punk rock to drink and pit to.

As The Scuffs ended their set, I was promptly greeted by some drunken acquaintances who seemed to enjoy the night so far. A bullshit session later, Left Alone begins to rock. I remember seeing them at Warped Tour last summer. I was reminded tonight of vocalist Elvis's stage presence as being similar to Joe Strummer and Mike Ness, like he's sharing some personal experiences with the crowd. The audience seemed to be feeling the same way as they began to pit and sing along. I connected with their songs about old cars and old girlfriends like my favorite song they play, "Another Feeling".

As the night progressed, I got more and more drunk and the bands got more and more energetic. Angel City Outcasts kicked off their set of fast-paced and tight street-punk tunes. My favorite band member has to be lead guitarist Tak Boroyan, just because he fucking rocks out on the solos peppered all throughout their set. Lead singer Alex Brugge presents a working-class image while fronting the band and commanding the audience to get off their asses and dance. One of their best songs was "I'm an Angel City Outcast", because the crowd just went off and sang along. If you were to mix Rancid, Necromantix, and the best damn Kentucky farmhouse band, here's their bastard child! I must say, I was blown away even more than the first time I saw them—which is saying a whole lot.

In the headlining spot was Side One Dummy's own The Briggs. The last time I saw them was a long time ago, when they were called I Decline. Back then, vocalist Joey LaRocca was behind the drums and singing. Now he's doing vocals, and there's a new drummer. The Briggs are pretty much your traditional street-punk band, borrowing different styles from different punk-rock bands (like Cock Sparrer, The Ramones, and Toy Dolls). I didn't especially enjoy their medio-core set and felt that there was a lack of energy in the band's performance. The crowd seemed to dig The Briggs, so I left after the fifth song to beat the exit rush and let the crowd enjoy themselves.

<BIG SANDY>



LEE ROCKER BIG SANDY AND HIS FLY-RITE BOYS THE VAQUETONES

January 11, 2005

@ House of Blues (Anaheim, CA)

Text and photos by Annette Ovanessian
This Tuesday night at the House of Blues was one crazy night! As my friend and I spent some time at a happy-hour spot before the show, our night of drinking had only just begun. Let's just say that I had one too many tonight. My New Year's resolutions have now been terminated.

The show was not packed at all. There was plenty of space to move around, and plenty of time to scope out the scene. While surveying the crowd, I noticed that this night's audience was filled with both young, and old.

With a sense of country-billy mixed with Latin flavor, The Vaquetones presented smooth vibes and calmness throughout their performance. They were very entertaining, but, to me, they target more of the older crowds. I say this because, most older people like to listen to smoothed-out radio stations like L.A.'s

<LEE ROCKER>



<LEE ROCKERS>



KOST 103.5, and The Vaquetones fit right in. But there's nothing wrong with listening to KOST. As a matter of fact, it has a setting on my own car stereo.

Okay, I can't lie to you guys and say that I remember everything about this night, because I don't. It's not that I forgot, either, but the night just went by so fast...and I was just completely trashed. You can go ahead and call me a lightweight, but after four drinks and more coming, it was a bit too much for my little body to handle. My head was spinning, my mind was spinning, and I was trying to take photos dance at the same time. During the break between The Vaquetones and Big Sandy, I was trying to find some air. There was a private party going on upstairs at my favorite outside patio bar, so it was closed off for the night. The only air I could get was a small smoking area...which did not help, as far as getting clean, fresh air.

Cigarette smoke was everywhere, and that smell did not work well with my situation, so I went back inside. I began walking around and noticing that every guy came with his girlfriend, and in my vulnerable state, I began to feel a bit lonely. But, as soon as Big Sandy and His Fly-Rite Boys took stage, everything was back to FUN! The power of pure rockabilly music is really touching. That's one of the main reasons I love listening to it. It's filled with so much soul that it brings a smile on your face. The amazing bass lines and the country guitar twang is always loads of fun. Although, Big Sandy seemed to be a bit mellow tonight as far as body movements, I thoroughly enjoyed every song they played. "Jumping from 6 to 6" is one song that really got me on my feet, and some of the slower jams really allowed me to tune in on the music coming from each instrument. The bass player was GREAT! I'm not sure if he is an original member or not, but he was this little short,

cute older guy who was enjoying every minute up onstage. He looked and played like a complete natural. It was so cute how Big Sandy had his guitar strap pulled in tight and his guitar was steadily resting on the top of his chest, letting his gut hang out from underneath. They don't call him "Big" for nothing!

Stray Cats bassist Lee Rocker was about to head onstage. At this point, I was feeling a little wheezy, but thankfully it didn't escalate into a "the bathroom is your best friend" night. I would have been miserable. Lee Rocker was amazing. Not only can this guy play the stand-up bass with all his might, he can damn well sing, too. He had so much soul with the way he moved and the way he carried himself onstage that you wonder why he's not as big as he should be. He even sang a couple Stray Cats jams like, "Rock This Town", and "Stray Cat Strut". Even while he was singing his own tunes, I noticed that a lot of folks were singing along. This was the time where the older part of the crowd came out of hiding and started to make some noise. Lee Rocker didn't get tired; he just kept on going and going. I can't remember if there was an encore, but I will say that if he ever plays again, I'll be there for sure!

The show was over, and it was time to make a wise decision. Even the idea of my nice bed at home sounded comfortable, I knew that I could not drive drunk all the way home to L.A., because I like to be alive! My friend, however, lives close to the House of Blues, so she was kind and offered her nice couch for me to crash on. Before we headed home, we were both extremely hungry and pulled into Taco Bell. Bad idea. Mexican food when you're drunk is not a good mix, especially from Taco Bell. Even though I didn't throw up, I was feeling sick the whole night through, and I don't even remember falling asleep. In the morning I drove home in traffic and took my hungover ass to work.

THE RIDLIN' KIDS AMERICAN HI-FI BOWLING FOR SOUP

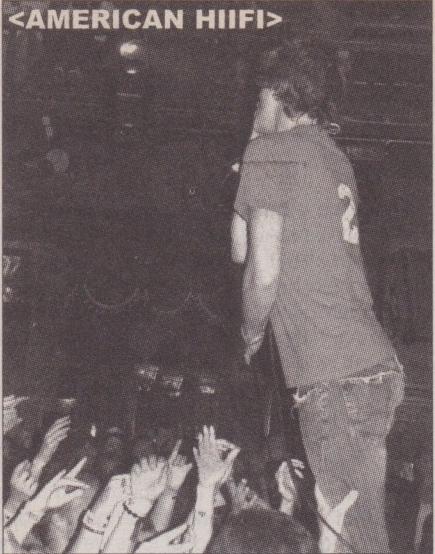
January 14, 2005 @

the House of Blues (Anaheim, CA)

Text and photos by Todd Markel

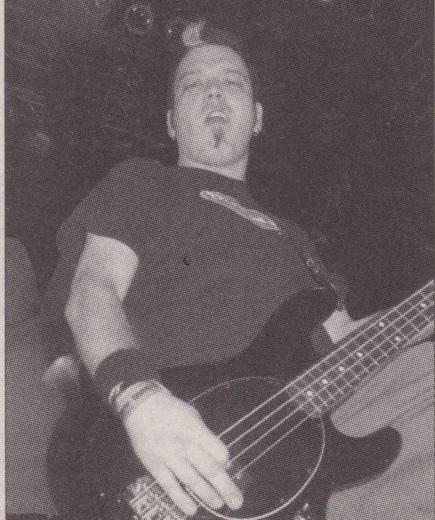
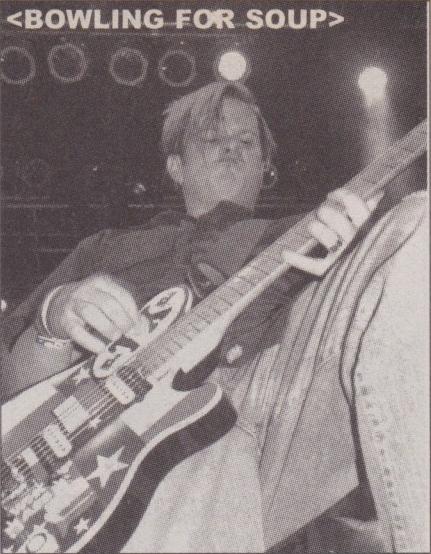
I probably should have known something was wrong by the size of the line outside of the House of Blues in Anaheim. It was huge! "Maybe it's just the initial surge, and in a few minutes the line will be more manageable," I say to myself. Wrong.. If anything, the line is only getting longer. I get in line, and it slowly winds its way back and forth like a large queue for a broken theme-park ride. It never takes this long to get into a show here, even on sold-out nights...and tonight is not sold out. After almost an hour-and-a-half in line, I am finally at the point of having my ID checked.

Oh, they have some new-age verification machine that sucks your driver's license in and spits out a wristband with your name on it. Is this what's taking forever? Well, it's not

<AMERICAN HI-FI>

helping. No one is telling us were to go to be searched; people are just standing there. For Pete's sake, the show has started—let's get this going. There seemed to be no organization at all, and it was taking far too long for each person to be cleared for entry. Once up the freakin' stairs (I'm pissed—can you tell?), it seems I've missed The Riddlin' Kids, which sucks, 'cause I was really looking forward to their set. Their latest CD, *STOP THE WORLD*, has been getting them a lot of attention, and I wanted to see what all fuss was about. I needed a beer, and fast!

As soon as I accomplish that, I hear the sounds of American Hi-Fi taking the stage; and since my precious photo pass only allows me up front for the first three songs, I needed to drink my beer in about three seconds and get downstairs and into the photo pit. I find it hard to believe that this show is not sold out as I try to squeeze past the throngs of teenyboppers crowding the dance floor. I use my camera in my outstretched hand as a way to show my purpose and to part the crowd. They grudgingly allow me through, and I can access the photo pit. I'm just in time to see lead singer Stacy Jones and the heartthrobs that are American Hi-Fi rocking out on stage and receiving the adoration of their fans. This could have been a bad night, due to the way

<BOWLING FOR SOUP>**<BOWLING FOR SOUP>**

it started for me, but I must admit that I was easily won over by American Hi-Fi's infectious, catchy songs. I was really only familiar with their big hit, "Flavor of the Week", but most of their songs were just as good. Among the songs played that I can recall, they surprised me with the Oasis-sounding "Another Perfect Day" (from their 2001 issued self-titled CD), which even I could sing along to after the first chorus. They also played the Blowing for Soup-sounding "The Geeks Get the Girls" (which will be on their next CD). Of course, they couldn't have finished the show without playing "Flavor of the Week", which had just about everybody in the house singing back "He's too stoned / Nintendo." I got to give these guys their due for being able to bring me out of a real bad mood. American Hi-Fi has a new CD coming out on March 29 called *HEARTS ON PARADE*.

Bowling for Soup hits the stage. If you've seen their video for "1985" on MTV, then you probably know them as the pop/rock heavyweights that they are. Each band member seems like a cartoon character come to life (incidentally, they were selling a Bowling for Soup comic book at the merchandise table). If I was having fun with American Hi-Fi, then I was having a blast with Bowling for Soup. Lead singer Jaret Reddick is the mischievous

<AMERICAN HI-FI>

master of ceremonies for the show. Chris Burney is their large guitarist, and he will occasionally lick his guitar or a guitar pick before he tosses it into the audience. They've stated that the band's purpose in life is to drink beer and have fun, and it shows in their funny and exciting stage act. They played the catchy "Girl All the Bad Guys Want" and the first song off of their latest CD, *A HANG-OVER YOU DON'T DESERVE*, the melancholy "Almost" ("I almost got drunk at school, at 14 / Where I almost made out with the homecoming queen.") They finished their show with their current MTV hit "1985", which the over-30 crowd in the upper level seemed to know all too well. Reddick has been quoted as saying, "If you want to be angry, this is not the album for you. If you want to smile and have a good time and think about chicks and beer, this is your album." That can undoubtedly be said about their live show, as well, 'cause despite everything, I had a great time.

THE ARCADE FIRE TYCHO & FINAL FANTASY

January 16, 2005

@ the Troubadour (Los Angeles, CA)

By Jeff Lambert

When I pull into the West Los Angeles parking lot, I have no idea what to expect from tonight's show. I could be minutes away from something amazing...or I could be setting myself up for a major let-down. Honestly, it could go either way. Recently I've become a The Arcade Fire junkie—listening to their music for hours on end, reading up on them on a daily basis, etc., etc. It seems that everywhere I turn I hear about how unbelievable they are in concert—which, to a certain extent is great. I'm all for building up a good band, but now the hype surrounding this young Montreal quartet is spewing out of every national music source known to man, making it virtually impossible for them to live up to their growing legend. Needless to say, I am thrilled to see them perform, but also equally anxious to see if they can live up to these lofty expectations.

Walking into The Troubadour a few minutes late, I grab a beer and make my way into the motionless crowd. On stage stands Final Fantasy, tall and skinny, with a violin on his shoulder and one foot on a recording pedal. The listeners stand silently while he sings and plays his violin. Each individual in the room has their eyes locked on the young troubadour, fixated on his strangely magnetic appeal. His masterful work on the violin has quickly captivated the audience, winning us over with his unbelievable talent and expert precision. He begins one song plucking the violin

almost like a bass guitar and records it with the pedal. He then loops the bass line while adding a different layer of violin over it. The layers form a solid foundation for his modest vocals and provide the perfect undertone for his booming violin solos. His performance is so mind-blowing that I catch myself saying, "The violin is so badass." A loud ovation from the crowd is well deserved after the performance that Final Fantasy just put on.

Tycho B must now follow up on what turned out to be an incredible opening act. Unfortunately for Tycho, he is sandwiched between two incredible acts, rendering his performance boring and dull. Tycho B is a very talented guitarist and has a quality singing voice, but his music seems a better fit for a four-piece band than a one-man acoustic act. His set grows tiresome by the second song, and soon my subtle drunk slips into a sleepy daze.

Once his act is over, the crowd around me starts to buzz. The buzz quickly turns to applause when The Arcade Fire files neatly on stage. There are seven, maybe eight people with the band tonight—many more than I expected—and I am pleased to see they invited Final Fantasy to play violin for the show. They immediately dive into their set and open with "Wake Up", a remarkable piece of work from their Merge Records debut FUNERAL. The song instantly establishes a connection with the audience, as everyone sings along with the undeniably catchy chorus.

By the midpoint of the song the crowd erupts, and everyone starts to dance. If you are familiar with The Arcade Fire, you know that, for the most part, they are not "dance music," but the energy they bring to the building tonight quickly trumps any label you could ever put on them. They mix in a few older songs before breaking into the upbeat crowd-favorite "Neighborhood #3 (Lights Out)" and segue into "Rebellion (Lies)". The music sounds tight and well rehearsed; and when you combine that with the band's onstage theatrics, the once-intimate concert is transformed into a full-blown opera. Lead singer/guitarist Win Butler's energy set the tone for the song, but his wife,

Régine, and guitarist Richard Parry wind up stealing the show. Their actions border on the absurd, as Parry wildly bangs a loose drumstick on the stage scaffolding before getting into a fight with another band member while wearing a motorcycle helmet. All the while Régine seems lost in the music, but she finds time for a creepy game of peek-a-boo with the crowd. As the opera moves forward, the onstage antics get even more bizarre.

While engrossed in the music of their finale, "Neighborhood #2 (Laika)", I notice Richard Parry climbing up the scaffolding like a monkey and thrashing around uncontrollably. The sight itself renders me speechless, but I am more impressed by his ability to bang his drumstick in beat with the music while he flails hysterically 15 feet off the ground. Through all their silly antics,

The Arcade Fire managed to maintain flawless musical precision and create an environment unlike any other. The outrageous outbursts only added to the overall experience and stamp a lasting image in our minds of one of the best live acts to grace the Troubadour stage in years.

HEAVYWEIGHTS OF HARDCORE TOUR:

HATEBREED

AGNOSTIC FRONT

DIECAST

LOVE IS RED

THE AUTUMN OFFERING

January 17, 2005

@ the House of Blues (Anaheim, CA)

Text and photos by Brian Perez

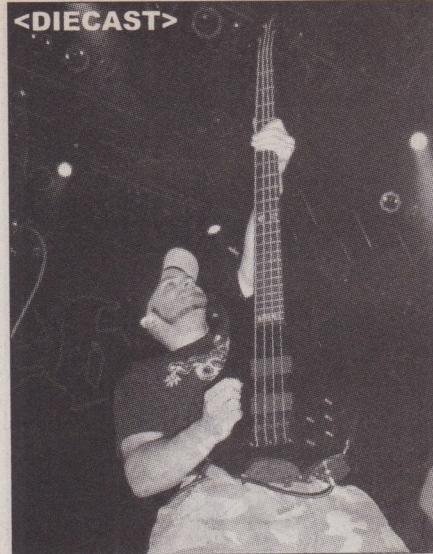
Tonight, Downtown Disney was the set for the sold-out last show of the Heavyweights of Hardcore tour. Walking in the small venue, I still laugh to myself about going to any type of hardcore, industrial, metal, punk shows here because of the location. The crowd was made up of all types and sizes, and you could just feel the energy building for a long night of moshing.

Opening up this event was The Autumn Offering, and just as soon as they started playing, a small pit was brewing up. You expect an opening band to stir up the place, and lead singer Dennis Miller and bassist Sean Robbins handled got the crowd to move with their song "The Great Escape" (which is a track off of their album REVELATIONS OF THE UNSUNG). They had me head-banging to a couple of songs during their set. For the last song, they played "Deflowered" and ended their night with one last mosh pit. The Autumn Offering will be on the Alliance of Defiance tour starting on the 25th of this month. You can also checkout their music at www.theautumnoffering.com.

The other band of the night had a name that I wouldn't have guessed for a hardcore band. Coming from Nashville, the band called Love Is Red had to keep the night flowing with hard riffs. During their performance, a small fight was going on, and lead singer Hunter took notice of it right after finishing up a song and said, "We're at Disneyland. Come on, be happy!" After that, they carried on with the show playing "Close My Eyes", which they mentioned is getting some airplay on HEADBANGERS BALL. Overall, their music had enough energy to keep everyone moving and ready for the next band.

Diecast was up next, and as soon as I heard the drummer doing his soundcheck, I felt the intensity of the beats. Making their way from Boston, Diecast had their fans in Anaheim by playing songs off their latest album, TEARING DOWN YOUR BLUE SKIES. They had the crowd going so wild that when I was

<DIECAST>

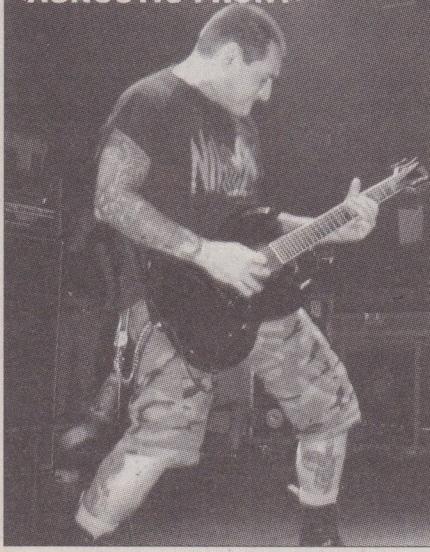


<THE AUTUMN OFFERING>



standing on the sidelines during a song, the pit got so big it reached out to where I was! Drummer Jason Costa just pounded the beats, and lead singer Colin Schleifer poured out his voice, making for great metal harmony. I would notice people who had wife-beaters taking a short breather from the pit all red from so much moshing, but as soon as another song would start, they would hurry back for more. Another thing that made the crowd roar was a cover of Pantera's "Mouth for War", giving respect to Dimebag Darrell, which was a loss to all of us. If you ever get the chance to see Diecast, I would say go for it, because you'll defiantly have a good time. They're still on tour until early February for more on them head to .

Now was the time for a band I've seen a couple of times before—and I knew how crazy it could get. As I was thinking about that, I overheard two security guys talking about being more alert to catch anything "out of control" while they played. With a burst of music, Agnostic Front took stage and played a variety of old songs: "Crucified", "Undertow", "Gotta Go"; and ones off of their new album, ANOTHER VOICE: "Take Me Back" and "Peace". While playing, Roger would talk about having pits

<LOVE IS RED>**<AGNOSTIC FRONT>**

all over the venue's floor, and they started right after he would finish his sentence. After all these years, the band still give out 110% live. You can catch them this year on the Return to Homebase tour. Their new album hits stores on January 25.

I'm a bit of a metalhead, and finally, after a night of good performances, headliner and Grammy-nominated band Hatebreed took the stage. As you can expect from a band of this caliber, it was time to really finish the night off with a bang of metal, playing older songs like "Empty Promises" (from SATISFACTION IS THE DEATH OF DESIRE) to newer songs (e.g., "Unloved", "Straight to Your Face") and their Grammy-nominated song "Live for This" (off of 2003's THE RISE TO BRUTALITY). Lead singer Jamey Jasta would call out to everyone to put two fists in the air while guitarist Sean Martin and bassist Chris Beattie pumped out their metal riffs. Hatebreed delivered a great set to end the Heavyweights of Hardcore tour by working the venue to bigger pits and crowd-surfing. Hatebreed has dates in New Zealand, Australia, and Japan. If you would like to follow up on them.

MATES OF STATE REGINA SPEKTOR IDA

January 21, 2005
@ Bowery Ballroom (New York, NY)
By Erika Owens

Once you turn 21, birthdays seem to become relatively meaningless. Celebrations occur, but with much less pomp and circumstance, because, really, what is the big difference between 27 and 28? That sort of comfort and self-assurance rather than raucous revelry pervaded the air Friday night. Each of these acts had a reason to celebrate, since they all have fresh releases—including the Polyvinyl debut for Ida. It was quite enjoyable to attend a show where both the bands and the crowd were laid-back, friendly, and clearly interested in hearing some new tunes.

The show opened exactly on time with a crescendo of communal instrument tuning and bells. A beautiful harmonization developed out of this crescendo and ushered in the soft yet commanding presence of Ida. Soft, shimmery, quiet ditties dominated the set, within which Ida demonstrated their considerable range. From the new "The Love Below" (a simple, layered song that garnered a grand crowd response to the songs with a jazz-club vibe that utilized acoustic guitar to amplify the tone), Ida showcased the breadth of their sound. Singer Daniel Littleton commented on the somberness of the "all-blues set" due to his birthday and the inauguration on January 20th. Even in the post-coronation haze, the sensual strumming and sighing about love was still extremely affecting. After their stripped-down, unassuming set, it was easy to see why Kori would mention that Mates of State once drove 19 hours to see Ida. With over a decade of experience and numerous releases, Ida are able to move a crowd with a subtlety and strength that would warrant a trip of any length.

Next, Regina Spektor and her delightful scarlet piano ascended the stage for another hometown performance. I had not heard of her before, but judging from the nodding, shouting, and enthusiasm of the crowd, she has a strong fan base. And after her rousing set, she surely converted some new fans. Her performance made it clear that she has a commanding ability to play the piano and sing across styles and octaves. But her most noteworthy talent is lyrical. Inflection and vocal orchestrations showed her range, but it was ironic plays on words—like tying Ezra Pound to a pound of flesh—that I found intriguing. The entire set was pretty stunning, from the curious lyrics to her ability to play piano, sing, and drum simultaneously. I never had any idea what was next. A classical sound usually began the songs, which would then turn into some postmodern cycle of shouting, singing, and reflecting—and then end abruptly. But even this was not consistent, as she left the piano for a song with only an acoustic guitar. This diversity of approach and abilities was captivating, and that captivation was conta-

gious throughout the crowd. By the end, her call for the audience to put the "UH!" in "UH-merica" chorus was eagerly obliged and followed by an excited farewell.

Mates of State is one of the few bands that could follow up the energy of Spektor and reverence of Ida. This is due to the fact that the magnetism between Kori and Jason is so strong that it pulls you in and won't let you go. You forget that they are singing some really sappy, gratingly poppy stuff, which is supplemented by a cheery organ. You just enjoy it. Their set drew heavily from their recent full-length, TEAM BOO, but they also threw in a few new songs like "It's Not the Same Without You Around" and older tracks that created a peppy and satisfying mix. "Ha Ha" was played early on and got everyone dancing. As the crowd opened up more, Jason and Kori began joking about doing a Paul Schaffer impersonation to close out "An Experiment". Older tracks like "A Control Group" and "Proofs" got energetic responses from the crowd, but the band banter and familiarity of TEAM BOO inspired the most vocal crowd response, either a plea for "less talk/more rock" or a club-wide sing-along. Even a New York crowd couldn't resist the playful happiness of Mates of State.

MOS will be touring outside of New York on the West Coast during February supporting last fall's EP and DVD releases. Ida's HEART LIKE A RIVER Polyvinyl debut will be available everywhere February 22nd, and at the end of February they will begin a nationwide tour. Regina Spektor's album is available now, and her Website mentions that the show was taped for MTV and that the T-shirt sales for the show went to the Tsunami Relief Fund.

ADOLESCENTS YOUTH BRIGADE THE BRIGGS BOOBIE TRAP

January 22, 2005
@ the El Rey Theatre (Los Angeles)
Text by Yuri Beatnick
Photos by Brian Perez

I got through the doors a little late due to some trouble with the guest list, but I made it in to catch the last couple of songs from Boobie Trap. Playing high-speed old-school punk with an unmistakable Orange County sound, Boobie Trap does a good job of getting the crowd warmed up and moshing early in the night—something you rarely see. The band's success could be the fact that Frankie from China White is playing guitar with the band, or it could be that the lead singer pours beer all over her chest (to the delight of the adolescent crowd). Either way, Boobie Trap is a perfect opening band. You should definitely check them out.

Next up were The Briggs, who pleasantly surprised me. I remember seeing these guys a

<BOOBIE TRAP>



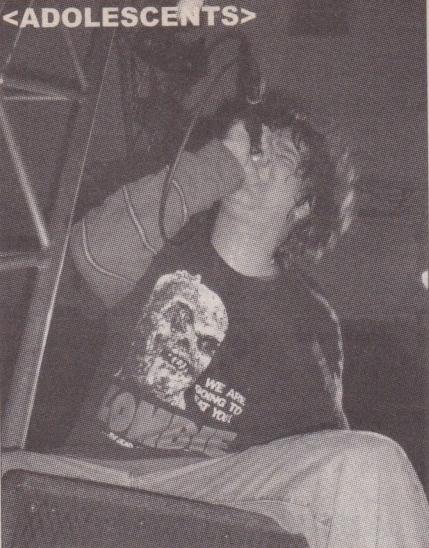
couple years back when they were getting started, and it seemed like they would be one of those bands to come and go. However, tonight they had their songs down, their attitude ready, and their soccer uniforms on. The Briggs not only looks like a bunch of English soccer goons, but they do a good job of capturing the English Oi! sound. I found myself tapping my shoe along to their happy-go-lucky tunes that make you want to drink and tear apart some bar like you'd see in some movie. The band did run into some problems: it seemed like one of the guitars broke mid-song, but it wasn't a major set back. All around, good fun—but nothing that made me want to be a permanent fan.

Yes, the three brothers are back and better than ever! Youth Brigade came out to a barrage of cheers, as Shawn Stern raised his beer to the crowd and kicked off things fast with "Violence". This band sounds amazing live, something that the CDs just don't capture. More surprisingly, they sound the same as they did in the '80s! Shawn's voice hasn't aged, leaving Youth Brigade with that authentic sound. Along with playing MY favorites, "The Sickness" and "Fight to Unite", Youth Brigade also did a couple of new songs that sound just as good as the old ones. Shawn did spend a lot of onstage time to plug The

<THE BRIGGS>



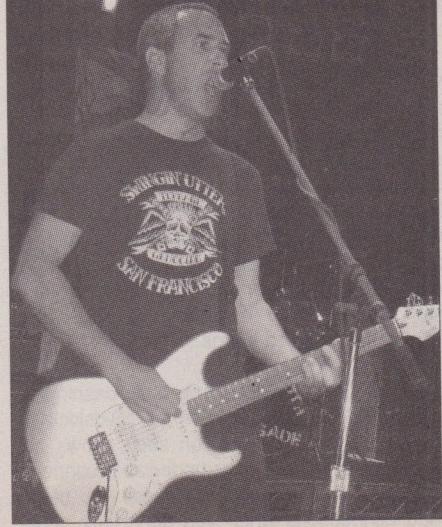
<ADOLESCENTS>



Swinging Utters—which just so happen to be a band on his label Better Youth Organization—but I don't think anyone cared or paid attention. Anyway, to end their powerful set, Youth Brigade played their social anthem "Sinking with California" and walked off the stage to even more cheers than when they came on.

Adolescents always make the crowd wait a while before they come on, and to create tension, Disney music played over the monitors giving all the skinhead goons a little taste of home. Coming all the way from Huntington Beach, Adolescents finally took the stage and opened with "No Way". This was probably my fifth time seeing Adolescents, and I'll be the first to say that once is enough! Not only do they play the absolute same set, but also they never sound different from the last time. I thought I was listening to the CD or something. Some people would argue that this makes the band better, but to me it doesn't seem like a live show but that I'm watching a staged concert. I might as well have gone to see Ashlee Simpson! To make things worse, this was the time of night when all the skinheads start fighting and bashing kids a lot smaller than them keeping the violent Orange County scene alive. Well, as for the set list, just watch the Adolescents' DVD that came

<YOUTH BRIGADE>



out on Kung Fu Records. If you watch the DVD, you would think you were at this show; nothing is different. So, if you haven't seen Adolescents play before, then go see them. Just know that once is enough.

Lovedrug

January 27, 2005

@ Chain Reaction (Anaheim, CA)
By Aimee Curran

Stepping in dogshit while wearing a new pair of shoes sums up the experience of Lovedrug's show at Anaheim's Chain Reaction. The venue emanates the dirty vibe of a middle-aged trucker crossing the U.S. on three hours sleep, no shower, and a belly full of microwaved 7-Eleven bagel bites. Not to sound overly prissy, but when I can't even lean on a wall for fear that I might get gum stuck in my hair, it's hard to be saved from a faltering show that ended so abruptly.

The anticipation had been growing thick like fog over the Golden Gate, building, not moving until the Ohio foursome took the stage opening with cascading melodies and the haunting lyrics of "Radiology". As the crowd was humming, guitars were strumming, and a crackle of electricity shocked me. Every instrumental note moved with a clear ebb and flow; however, the sound tech did nothing to support singer Michael Shepard's stormy wails. Unable to fight off a bronchial infection and 104-degree fever, Shepard limped through "Radiology", "Candy", "Pretend You're Alive", "Pandamoranda", and "Down Towards the Healing" accompanied by an abnormal amount of sweat. Even if Shepard possessed full vocal range and a normal body temperature, I began to get the impression that the mic was going to end up in the sound tech's ass. Shepard's motions to turn up his monitor happened so frequently that one might think it was part of the show. Shepard was quickly spiraling like a 1943 fighter plane shot in the tail, and so Lovedrug called it a day, exiting the stage to a smattering of applause from the sea of black hoodies and mopy heads. It was a could've/should've evening, further marred by Chain's attempt to emulate a CBGB feel by covering their walls with band T-shirts, making me feel trapped in a giant merch booth of rejects that no one wanted to buy. Ew.

BAD CREDIT MAGNUSON OFF TRACK PRIVATE I

January 28, 2005

@ SOMA (San Diego, CA)
By Kevin Farr

SOMA's side stage showcased a plethora of bands ranging in musical styles. Being that it was my first exposure to these bands, I entered the side stage with few expectations in regards to the what my ears might be exposed

to. From bubblegum pop-punk inspired by young cats in high school to straight-ahead rock and funk-rap-rock-punk, my eardrums absorbed the good, the bad, and the ugly.

Unfortunately (or fortunately), my ears took in two musically unoriginal acts before some rockers took the stage. Tonight reaffirmed my notion that punk's not dead, it just mutated into a multifaceted genre where free-thinking originality is no longer synonymous with punk. Oh, but don't fret, reader, we all know there are still kick-ass punkers out there, true to their beliefs and artistic inclinations to create something honest. And I'm in no way saying the music of Private I and Off Track isn't honest...it just honestly sucked.

Private I's set included tracks devoid of any creativity as their new age pop-punk came equipped with synchronized jumps to boring, redundant riffs providing a backdrop for equally monotonous lyrics. Hey, but every record label needs a Good Charlotte for the teeny-bobbin' young girls out there who need mundane music to complement their equally monotonous android-like lives.

Off Track followed Private, adorning the stage with a 15-foot snowman and some other phallic-looking prop. These antics seemed to create a connection between the crowd and the band. Regardless of my impression, the fans truly dug this band's flair. Their capes and fuzzy pink pants screamed "hug me" as they sung about girls and romantic relationships with inanimate iconic figures. And yes, they, too, had synchronized dance moves for all the ladies. They captivated the audience into singing along. Their music seemed secondary to their theatrically contorting their faces while singing. I hope for their sake it's all a joke on punk. As one fan put it: They were just alright, but they were a lot of fun." "Tis true, young rocker: they were incredible fun, despite their musical style of simple, slow melodic punk. Overall, if you compare repeatedly banging your head against a solid structure and the two above-mentioned named bands, each offers an equally entertaining experience.

Magnuson took the stage in a frenzy, opening up with a more artistic style. However uninspiring the opening bands were, artistic validity was redeemed, as Magnuson set themselves apart from others on the bill by playing kick-ass rock. The bassist was killin' his fretless bass, as his hands flew across the fret board. Their song structures were complex, in regards to time changes and composition. If one gave a careful listen, you could hear the complicated bass lines set the backdrop, as the drummer drove the beat. The guitar was heavily distorted, similar to Kill Me Tomorrow's sounds, just a lot harder and faster. The dynamics between the male bassist and female guitarist created a ethereal sound that rocked as well as entertained. There lyrical content had depth, and vocal harmonies enticed the listener. The composition had sustenance; it was something you could remember.

Last but not least were the potty-mouthed jokers of Bad Credit, who play a style similar to that of old-school Beastie Boys, plus the occasional live trumpet. Bad Credit's humor and wit

induced a rave response from the crowd, as heads swung and bodies bounced. Bad Credit was the only band to get feet moving and a rap jumping. Their style is a mixture of simple raps over punk, rock, and even funk. Their stage presence was remarkable, as their hard-hitting drummer kept a catchy rhythm. The track of the evening had to be "A New Dookie Rope", which one could only comprehend if you knew their "old skool" hip-hop history.

Despite some of the acts, the evening was fun. More importantly, the bands had a following, whether it was 20 heads or 100. Whether it's punk or metal, rap or rock, it's all connected by the rhythm living in us all. Even Republicans can rock. Haven't you seen those Christian rock bands kick some Jesus-lovin' ass?

ANGRY SAMOANS THE STITCHES SIDEKICK THE STRAYS

PRIMA DONNA

January 28, 2005

@ the Knitting Factory (Los Angeles)
By Yuri Beatnick

I didn't listen to the Knitting Factory parking warnings I got from so many people, so I ended up paying the price later. If you are planning on going to this venue, bring at least 12 bucks extra for parking! Anyway, once I got all situated, I got inside to see Prima Donna setting up. Once they started, I was amazed. I've seen Prima Donna at lesser venues, but tonight they had their sound locked in better than ever! Everything came in crystal clear, and everyone in the audience was into it. It is finally nice to see a new band playing new music and not just repeating what is already happening. Playing pre- to post-punk but also throwing in a unique blend of glam rock that will knock you sideways, frontman Kevin Preston tosses in all his trademark tricks, from karate kicks to swinging his arm like a windmill. Prima Donna do not disappoint. They definitely got shafted for this show, as they should have gone on later. Make sure and look for their upcoming release, and check them out as soon as you can.

Next were The Strays, who also pleasantly surprised me. If you are like me and wished The Killers would have more of a jagged tone to them, then The Strays are for you! Bringing back the original rock 'n' roll roots, The Strays play nothing but good tunes that will definitely be pleasing to your ears. All the girls came to the front of the stage for this one, and that only encouraged them to play even better. From beginning to end, The Strays played good songs.

Okay, now it's time for some band-bashing—and what better band to bash than Sidekick? I don't know how they get on such shows as these, but it may be their undeniable connections with Angry Samoans. I guess you need good connections when you don't play good

music, but Sidekick seems like a band that would open for Green Day, not The Stitches. Playing nothing more than typical pop-punk, this band reminds me of those "punk" bands that appear in those really bad teen movies. I'm not sure, but it always seems like people mosh while Sidekick is on...but what the band doesn't know is that it's one big practical joke. Anyway, don't see Sidekick or support them in any way or do anything that would encourage them. It would be better if this band just fades away.

After a horrible band like Sidekick, it would have to take an amazing band to get the momentum going again...and luckily, on this night it was The Stitches. Wasting no time at all, they jump right into "Nowhere" and never let you stop to catch your breath. Playing nothing but fast, energetic songs like "Automatic", "I Can't Do Anything", "Cars of Today", and everyone's favorite, "My Baby Hates Me", The Stitches are one of the best bands still alive after all these years. I was shocked to see that hardly anyone was moshing, but pogoing instead, keeping the spirit of '77 alive! The Stitches are a must-see, so when you see their name, you'd better be there.

To end the night, Angry Samoans came out, to the delight of the crowd. The band is now made up of half Angry Samoans and half Dickies, but they play all the tunes you would expect from this zany band, from "Hitler's Cock" to "Right Side of My Mind". But I noticed something different about the songs this time. I was usually put off on seeing Angry Samoans in the past because they started changing their songs. Cutting all the parts that Greg Turner wrote, some songs would only last a matter of seconds. But tonight it didn't seem like they changed any of the songs around at all, so I was very happy with the set. Angry Samoans hold a dance contest for anyone who wants to join, so the audience spilled on the stage to show off their moves, as if they were on DANCE 360! However, the Knitting Factory has a problem with having people on the stage, so they had the security throw everyone off the stage. Anyway, to end their set, they played "My Old Man's a Fatso", and then came back once more to play "Get off the Air". All good fun with Angry Samoans. With only one awful band, it was an all-around good show.

MIGHTY SIX NINETY

KISSING TIGERS THE COLOR TURNING

January 28, 2005

@ Vertigo's (Los Angeles, CA)
By Jeff Lambert

It's 8:30 p.m. now, and my phone rings. I check the caller ID, and it's a good friend of mine from high school. It's the fifth time in an hour he has called me. Each time he calls, he seems exponentially drunker, which makes me think twice about meeting him at an unknown location in downtown L.A. I'm supposed to be at Vertigo's around 11, so I agree to meet him, anyway. I call when I'm in the vicinity, and of course he

doesn't answer. I knew he wouldn't answer. After three failed attempts, I say "fuck it" and head to Vertigo's without him.

Despite the mishap with my drunken comrade, I arrive with time to spare. I decide to check out the parking situation around Vertigo's. The dimly-lit and mostly empty lots surrounding the club seem suspect, so I reluctantly choose valet. After paying an obscene amount to park my car, I stroll into the club, grab a cocktail, and head towards the stage, where The Color Turning just opened their set. This five-piece Orange County product has a strangely familiar sound—slightly reminiscent of Sunny Day Real Estate, but not a carbon copy, by any means. Each song starts and ends with the smooth rhythm of Jason Abraham's bass guitar, which provides a rock-solid foundation for the rest of the group. The band avoids simple power chords by incorporating complex guitar layering that sounds straight out of the Modest Mouse handbook. What separates The Color Turning from the pretenders is the mammoth presence of lead singer Steve Scavo. His voice carries each song to inspiring heights without overdoing it. The highlight of their performance came when they brought out the acoustic guitar while performing "The Middle Will Catch Us All". They flawlessly move from electric to acoustic, as Scavo strums his guitar and sings with the confidence of Liam Gallagher circa 1995. They received the loudest ovation of the night and definitely left Los Angeles with a handful of new fans.

After a 20 minute intermission, a rockin' group of kids from Santa Barbara going by the name Kissing Tigers took over the small stage. I've had the pleasure of seeing Kissing Tigers evolve during my years at UCSB, taking their new-wave dance music (think a friendlier version of The Faint) from the Isla Vista party scene to sold-out shows in trendy downtown Santa Barbara venues. They managed to impress someone at Slowdance Records along the way and recorded their full-length debut, *PLEASURE OF RESISTANCE*, in 2004. After their signing, they toured the U.S. and landed back in California to try out the "rock star" thing. Opening with the poppy "Rooms by the Hour", they got the small crowd dancing right away. Their prominent stage presence proved to be anything but boring, as they danced around the stage as if they had been touring for years. Unfortunately, the stage itself was too small for the lively act, as they struggled with feedback that sometimes drowned out the intricacies of the guitars and synth—which, if you listen to the album, are the core of their unique sound. The sound quality itself wasn't great, but songs like "I Died in a Mall" held up well and kept the crowd interested. They saved the best for last, closing with the super catchy "So Stay in Love". By the time the chorus rolled around, everyone in the room was dancing non-stop to the band's most popular tune. Those Kissing Tigers got past their onstage technical issues to put on a hell of a show.

It was getting late, and the crowd was growing smaller as the minutes passed. The Los Angeles-based band Mighty Six Ninety has quite a buzz surrounding them in independent music scene. To be honest, I am not familiar with their music, but I immediately liked what I heard once the show began. Their sound is

derived from the Morrissey-era '80s, both in music and style. They even dress the part with the red leather vest one of them wore on stage. They sounded crisp and clear and did a good job of connecting with their small audience. As time wore on, I began to tire of the mellow '80s rock and was waiting for one song to stand out from the rest. Unfortunately, that never happened. Instead, each song seemed to mesh into the next, and I left Vertigo's unsatisfied with their performance. Overall, they are a talented group and have a shot at being successful in the industry, but something tells me they came along about 20 years too late.

BARFLIES.NET 6TH ANNIVERSARY SHOW: THROW RAG RIVERBOAT GAMBLERS JACKASS REZUREX

January 28, 2005
@ the Alex's Bar (Long Beach, CA)
Text and photos by Brian Perez

Tonight, the Alex's bar host the Barflies.net 6th Anniversary Show with a kick-ass lineup. The rain started up again while I was waiting outside. When I finally got in, I grabbed a shot to warm me up.

Rezurex opened the night with their style of psychobilly. I've heard them a couple of times before, but this was the first time I've seen them live. Troy Ruessel layed down the guitar riffs, while Jeff Roffredo added the thumping sounds with the upright bass. Vocalist Daniel de Leon delivered a strong set of songs such as "Zombie Girl", "Don't Mess with Me", and "Graveyard". They also covered a punk song by The Damned, "Love Song", which sounded good with its psychobilly twist. If you'd like to sample Rezurex, you can listen to their song "Dia de Los Muertos" off Hellcat Records' *GIVE 'EM THE BOOT VOL. 5*.

Jackass got up on stage to perform some



<REZUREX>

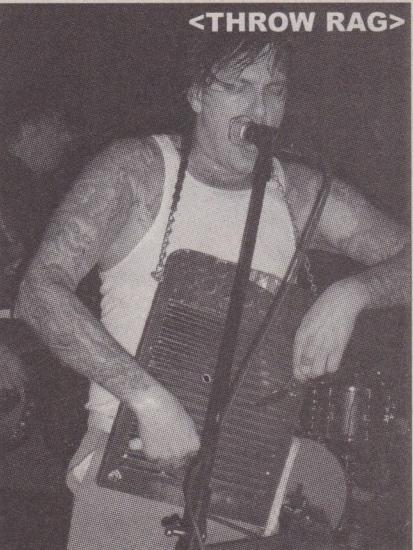


<RIVERBOAT GAMBLERS>



<JACKASS>

honky-tonk punk music. They are known for doing covers of various artists, such as Madonna and The Backstreet Boys. The band consisted of singer Toby Emery, Ben Dayo and Deepakalypse on guitars, and Peter Finestone filled in the drumbeats. The band had the venue sort of square-dancing to their country-punk sound. The female fiddler, Pearl, put more emphasis to the country feel



<THROW RAG>

by dancing and stomping on stage. Otherwise, their performance was a good mix to keep the night rolling. To find out more on Jackass, you can go to .

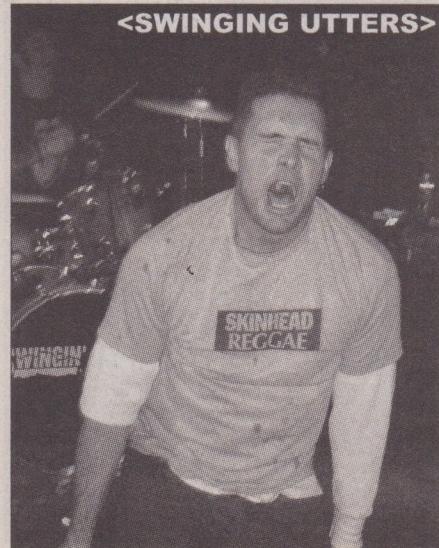
The next band, Texas's Riverboat Gamblers, really put out a lot of live energy. They started their set with "Let's Eat", "What's What", and "Rattle Me Bones" off SOMETHING TO CROW ABOUT. As always, lead singer Mike "Teko" Wiebe made his presence felt throughout the venue by singing and running everywhere. Freddy Castro provided the guitar riffs, Patrick Lillard assisted on bass, and Jessie 3X was on the drums. They had the venue moving along with more songs from their other self-titled release. If you need some good rock to blast out of your stereo, check them out. Also, later this year they will be part of Guinness' The Green 17th Tour.

To end the night, Throw Rag took the stage to perform a one-of-a-kind show. The first thing people must have noticed about Throw Rag is that Craig Jackman (a.k.a. "Jacko") used two spoons and a washboard as a percussion instrument. They played songs such as "Bag of Glue", "Race with the Devil", and "Space Hump Me". Lead singer Captain Sean-Doe, guitarist Dino, bassist Franco Fontana, and drummer Chango von Streicher came out in full swing. During their set, Jacko also played the bugle while, Captain Sean-Doe would strip down to his underwear to get the ladies to stick money down his crotch. Playing songs from TEE-TOT and DESERT SHORES, Throw Rag gave everyone a night to remember with their collage of hardcore, punk, and rock sound.

SWINGING UTTERS BULLETS N OCTANE THE BANDITS

January 29, 2005
@ SOMA (San Diego, CA)
Text and photos by Kevin Farr

As I rolled up to SOMA Saturday, I felt the energy emanating through the cement walls encasing the side stage. It was to be an evening of rock 'n' roll in America's finest city.



<SWINGING UTTERS>

The venue was packed, the punks were present, and the bands were ready to kick some rock 'n' roll ass.

The night kicked off with an opening act I unfortunately missed. Oh, well. The Bandits took to the stage with a rockabilly swagger. Hair greased up, shirt sleeves torn, and pants cuffs rolled up like Huck Finn. The Bandits prepared to entertain a crowd of approximately 300 heads packed into the suffocating SOMA side stage floor. This trio's stage presence was reserved till halfway through "She's Red Hot". At this juncture, the guitarist and upright bassist moved toward centerstage. The bassist proceeded to plant his feet as the guitarist climbed up the bass, poised and playing. That's right: he positioned himself atop the bass, stood erect, and rocked out, both artists balanced in equilibrium. They repeated this fiasco during an Elvis cover, as well, but this time they switched instruments during the process. Can you say ROCK 'N' ROLL? The band finished up with class, playing the famously popular Ritchie Valens (though he didn't originally write it), "La Bamba".

I wonder what happens when you mix bullets and octane. Something deadly? A Southerner looking for a democrat? No. Well, maybe. But tonight I saw something else: the best fucking rock show my eyes have witnessed (so far). O.C.'s Bullets N Octane had the look, the style, and skills to kill rock dead, then resurrect it. They erupted in a spastic frenzy as their stage presence left viewers in awe. Ladies reached for lead singer Gene, caressing his legs as he leaned into the crowd screaming lyrics inches from their frontal lobes.

Each member had the ability to perform at an unprecedented level. The interaction between the band and the crowd created a state of panic...a state of ELATION! When they played "Pirates", fans were sharing the mic with Gene, and a smile graced his face. Each band member commanded his instrument, while simultaneously enticing the crowd to feel emotion. The most common quote passing mouth to mouth after their set was that "that was one of the best live bands I've ever seen." My heart begins to palpitate as the anxiety courses through my veins just ruminating over the show. DIG THROUGH YOUR COUCH, FIND



< BULLETS N OCTANE >

SOME FUNDS! GO PANHANDLE, SKIP LUNCH (who needs food when there's rock 'n' roll?!)—JUST GO SEE THIS BAND!

Lastly was NoCal's "punkiest" "drunk-rock" bands, Swinging Utters, who have Jack Darlymple from One Man Army playing guitar now. And play he did...until his finger bled right onto the body of his guitar. Swinging Utters may have aged, but they still put the "rock" in punk rock. Despite their stated displeasure over the lack of alcohol (SOMA is an all-ages venue), they played on. At the first chord, the crowd erupted. Peepuck, filled with elation, struck himself in the forehead with the mic twice in the same spot, drawing blood.

Peepuck wasn't the only bleeding punk, as the crowd drew blood, as well...from one another! The pit was a mix of roughness and slam-dancing. The crowd was cohesive enough to pick one another up of the floor, all in time to Swinging Utters' barrage of rapid-fired songs. Their set combined new and old material, with a Youth Brigade track thrown in the mix. But sadly, the one stage-dive plot was foiled by the timely SOMA security, who escorted the punk-rocker back to the floor. Hey, better than out the door, right? Are the days of stage-diving dead in sue-happy California?

BLEEDING THROUGH THE WARRIORS XDEATHSTAR X AS HOPE DIES

RED LETTER PLAGUE

January 29, 2005
@ the Glass House (Pomona, CA)
By Darren Davis

The metalcore outfit known as Red Letter Plague were first on the bill for the night's festivities. The Glass House was still half-empty when they began their set, as the majority of the kids were in the horrendous line outside waiting to be patted down by the Glass House's crackpot team of "we don't fuck around" security guards.

RLP played their string of breakdown-encrusted songs to a crowd that was still getting situated. The singer loomed about with a surprisingly unorthodox voice, which wasn't so much a scream as it was a sort of dull screech. I have to hand it to them: the ensemble took whatever crowd participation they were given and ran with it, turning what could have been an awkward set in front of a morose crowd into a completely decent opening act.

By the time As Hope Dies began, the majority of the Glass House's sold-out crowd had entered the building, raided the merch tables, and were ready to give their undivided attention to the stage—which the boys of AHD most sincerely deserved. For 25 minutes, AHD had command over the crowd (an act the previous band had not accomplished so thoroughly). They played tracks off their latest record and oldies from BIRTH PLACE AND BURIAL SITE,

Their show, on the other hand, was the real reason to stand up and watch them. The following is just a few moments of their stage show and where they hit on the Spinal Tap Scale (STS (all rights reserved)): Cutting off a fake hand with a sword: 7 1/2; a line stating "Party like a dragon, breath fire through your mouth": 8; a puppet show behind the drummer that included a dragon: 11.

Next on stage was The Riverboat Gamblers. Flat out, the band stole the show. Their not-quite-punk rock/not-quite-rockabilly sound was just what the doctor ordered.

The band was tight, crazy, and the songs were wonderfully crafted. Lead singer Teko was one of the best frontmen I've ever seen. He didn't just use the stage, but the entire venue was his playground. He jumped into the crowd, making his way all to the bar with microphone in hand. He even jumped several times onto an overhang over one of the doors, where he then began to molest a plaster of Paris elf (ah, just like Mick Jagger did on the No Security Tour). Teko's flamboyant frontman skills were like a combination between old Bono, Hives lead singer "Howlin'" Pelle Almqvist, and Taking Back Sunday's Adam Lazzara. Quite impressive. I implore you to go and see them when they come back through town with Flogging Molly and Hot Water Music in March.

As unprofessional as it might sound, I had never heard a single note of The Bronx's music before Saturday night. That's a shame, too, because I've heard very good things about them from both friends and music magazines. I have to admit that I was pretty impressed with the band. They were dirty punk rock, complete with giant mosh pit and crazy lead singer. The pit was the largest I've seen in a place as small as Alex's. It seemed that about half of the whole floor was full of pit-seekers. There were a lot of big, scary guys in the pit, one of which hit me so hard I thought that I was going to look over and see my spleen limping away from the pit.

Overall, the night was a success. We were there to celebrate a venue which is helping to bring live bands to Long Beach—something that is dearly needed. Remember, there is nothing wrong with being a dive bar, as long as you have some pretty rockin' bands to come and liven the troops up.

EISLEY THE ELECTED THE COLOUR

February 5, 2005

@ the Glass House (Pomona, CA)
By Mindy Poder

Handlebar mustaches, dancing, and having a good time. If you hold such things in high regard, then the opening band, The Colour, is one for you to check out. Wyatt Hull's Robert Smith-like voice coupled with infectious

dance beats resulted in the crowd's synchronized hand-clapping and orgasmic screams. Due to such a spectacle, I thought I was at a Rooney or Backstreet Boys concert.

The band seemed to have brought their own large following, and Wyatt and bass player Luke Macmaster did everything in their collective power to smother their band-aides with love. In between crowd-pleasers like "Open Up the Boulevards", Luke could be seen pointing to specific people in the crowd, saying "I love this guy," while Wyatt offered his shaggy head of light locks to the girls in the audience dying to pet him. Although I was not exactly fond of them—for I believe good music should do more than just make people dance—I cannot deny that their music did an excellent job of "turn[ing] it up and turn[ing] the crowd on."

After The Colour's set, many of the black-haired dancers left to get a "breath of fresh air"—which, in accordance with my desires, enabled me to get a closer look at one of my favorite musicians: Blake Sennett. Also the guitarist and co-singer of Rilo Kiley, he shines in his side project, The Elected. I have seen Blake perform countless times with Rilo Kiley, but tonight was his best performance. "Greetings in Braille" and "Go On" were two songs that got me. (He also introduced a "celebrity" special guest, "the redhead"—or as I know her, Jenny Lewis.) These songs capture Blake's amazing songwriting skills. Like most effective storytellers, Blake focuses on specific events in his songs but somehow makes the circumstances general enough for others to relate to. Although The Elected only has one album, ME FIRST, they played other songs, such as "Bank and Trust", which, like many good songs, invoked a number of emotions from me. The crowd laughed at lyrics such as "She gets real mean when she's drunk / She finally fell asleep and I'm glad" but felt something quite different at other parts of the song.

Four people make up The Elected, but it is hard to pay attention to anyone other than Blake, who, in addition to singing and playing guitar

and keyboards, talked quite a bit in between songs. When someone in the crowd screamed, "I love you, Blake," Blake exclaimed, "My mom must be in the crowd." In an act to get the crowd interested in the other members of the band, Blake talked about how, despite Mike Runion's bass-playing skills, it is really Mike's good looks that are awe-worthy. Despite Blake's attempts to get the audience interested in the other band members, the night was indisputably all about Blake and his amazing talents as a musician, songwriter, and person.

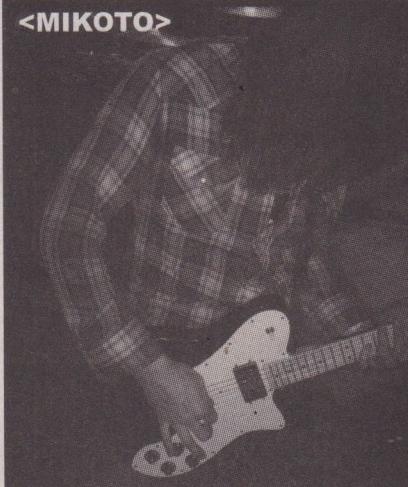
A few minutes passed, and the members of Eisley (the DuPree siblings and their neighbor) began to set up their equipment, the youngest one sucking on a lollipop. Although there are two tall and very lanky boys in the band, it is the girls—two blondes and one brunette—who deserve all the attention. Songs like "Marvelous Things" and "Telescope Eyes" (for which they recently shot a video for) explain why Sherri (20) and Stacy (15) deserve the attention: their amazing voices. One of the songs they played in which the girls sounded quite good was "Golly Sandra" (which is on their upcoming full-length album, ROOM NOISES). The girls told the audience that they were "nasally" and must not sound very good, but I would never have noticed their having a head cold. The band give off the impression that they are performing at a recital, not a rock show. This is because the members are idle, extremely cute, and full of gratitude. Although staying in the same place and hardly looking up are viewed in a negative light, this made the band very concentrated and resulted in a very good sound.

Also, after practically every song each girl said "Thank you" and "You guys are awesome" in reply to the roaring applause that greeted each song's end. Although there were indeed great people in the audience (with the exception of the dorks I had to stand by), the members of Eisley are the ones who need to be thanked and told how awesome they are for putting on such a delightful show.

January 14, 2004

Chain Reaction • Anaheim, CA

<MIKOTO>



<HORSE THE BAND>



<TAFKTA>

photos by Shannon Haslinger

the older tracks being instantly recognized viscerally by the waves of nostalgia I felt of a younger me blasting the record years back.

Redlands's own xDeathstarx took the stage next...and when I say "took the stage," I mean they really took the stage—all eight of them. The Wu-Tang Clan of Southern California hardcore, xDeathstarx had an unfair advantage over previous bands by sheer numbers alone. The four singers would flood out from the stage into the no man's land where the larger security force would sit in between the stage and the Barrier and greet the oncoming pile-up of kids trying desperately to grab the mic and sing along. It was good, clean fun, and the members of xDeathstarx kept the mood positive by pausing for a message about friendship through Christianity. Then they announced that this would be a special show for one of their singers, who would be wed in the coming weeks.

Out of all the bands playing that night, I was most excited to see The Warriors. Their debut album, WAR IS HELL, has been a constant in my CD player since its release. As they began, I couldn't decide whether I wanted to stand side-stage or be in the crowd, so I did what a complete idiot would and attempted to do both, running back and forth between songs.

Their powerhouse of a vocalist was loud and rude, destroying the mic with his trademark high-pitched screams and growls, blowing snot-rockets on stage and taunting the crowd before every breakdown. They played all the tracks I hoped they would, including "Red, Black, and Blue", "The Cure", and "Slings and Arrows". The quintet ended their set on a surprising note, covering Rage Against the Machine's "Bulls on Parade"—the surprising part being that they did it very well.

I have covered Bleeding Through shows more times than I have those of any other band in existence, this one being my sixth. The first three were spread over the course of a year, around the time when THIS IS LOVE, THIS IS MURDEROUS had first been released. I had been following the band since their first record, and their rising success after singing with Trustkill had opened up bigger shows for me to write about. The latter of the three shows—including this one—had been due to my interest in other bands playing nights they were headlining.

The main thing I've noticed about Bleeding Through over the years is that the kids attending their shows are becoming younger and younger, to a point where concerned parents drive by the Glass House glaring at the loitering crowd as their precious baby walks in. But another thing I've taken note of is Bleeding Through's live act has only become stronger overtime. I've seen two fantastic BT performances at the Glass House (one of which can be viewed by purchasing their live DVD). But their set this night would come to outdo all previous memories—something that surprised my jaded eyes.

As usual, it started out with Willem Dafoe's trademark tag line from THE BOONDOCK

SAINTS echoing through the venue, only to be drowned out by the crowd, who instantly pushed forward as tiny Brandan Schieppati took the stage. They opened up with "Love Lost in a Hail of Gunfire" (no surprise there). They continued with scattered tracks off their Trustkill release and found time to throw in some oldies—something I've always appreciated. Their guitar players never missed a beat, standing on the monitor in front of a sea of wiggling fingers while dishing out solos left and right, throwing in chugga-chugga breakdowns here and there and tossing in epic sing-along parts just for shits and giggles. The boys (and girl) of Bleeding Through always played with sincerity.

No matter how many times they've headlined the Glass House, no matter how many times they've performed the songs in front of crowds that can sometimes look exactly the same as the ones before, it always seems like the first time, like this particular crowd was more important than the rest. I realized this more now than on any other night I had seen them play.

**ALEX'S BAR FIVE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY SHOW:
THE BRONX
THE RIVERBOAT GAMBLERS
RAPID FIRE
TIJUANA KNIFE FIGHT
LOS MYSTERIOS**

January 29, 2005
@ Alex's Bar (Long Beach, CA)
By Brian Spiegel

Over the last five years, Alex's has become a favorite venue for punk and rockabilly bands passing through the Long Beach area. Thank god about that, though, because outside of Koo's (and sometimes DiPizza's), a music scene in Long Beach is almost non-existence.

On the weekend of January 29th Alex's celebrated its fifth anniversary (which, for those of you who are thinking of buying them gifts, is the

silverware anniversary) with two days of special concerts featuring some of the best "underground" bands around. The Saturday show was headlined by The Bronx and featured performances by The Riverboat Gamblers, Rapid Fire, Tijuana Knife Fight, and Los Mysterios.

Opening the show was Los Mysterios. This Spanish band had a desperado sound that would seem at home on the soundtrack of KILL BILL VOL. 2. Their first few songs had (for lack of a better word) an epic sound to them, with the lead singer spitting out Spanish yarns like they were part of an important story (though I wouldn't know, with my three years of high-school French). After a few songs, the band seemed to flip its sound a bit.

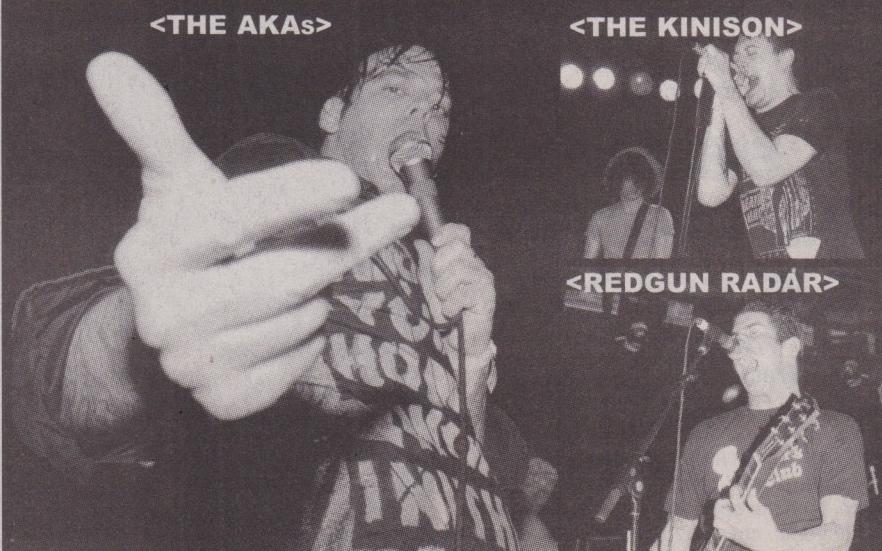
The next couple of songs felt less Spanish and more—how can I put this?—almost Brit-pop-like. I swear to god, one of the songs reminded me of Radiohead's "Optimistic". Was I imagining it? Was this band really combining Spanish sounds with Brit-pop? Los Mysterios lived up to their name musically.

The award for lowest band self-esteem of the night went to Tijuana Knife Fight. This band belted out the night's shortest set, only about 15-20 minutes. The lead singer kept commenting on the audience's lack of interest. In my opinion, the number-one rule of playing live rock is: "Don't insult the audience." If you're playing in a bar as an opener to a big band like The Bronx, you have to expect that the audience is not really going to care about you. Just play your music, then go and get your free drinks at the bar. I'm not trying to be insulting—you just have to know what kind of situation you are in.

After a rather long set change, Rapid Fire took the stage. How can I describe Rapid Fire and have you, the humble readers, believe me? I'll put it this way: Rapid Fire was half Iron Maiden, half Sum 41 and all Spinal Tap. Plus, they seemed damn serious about the whole thing. The music was pure metal with screams, guitar solos, and costumes.

January 27, 2004
Glasshouse • Pomona, CA

<THE AKAs>



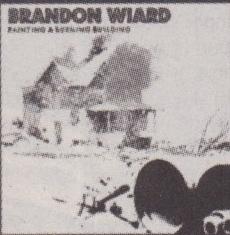
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photos by Jimbo Gray

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Pitchfork Media review of "Painting A Burning Building"

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HEY! HEY! WE'RE THE UK!

all reviews written by United Kingdom correspondent, Mathew Hocking

NEVERTHEMORE NEVERTHEMORE LAST CHANCE/ENGINEER

Neverthemore rock the whole melodic post-hardcore style along the lines of On the Might of Princes and even Mogwai. Evidently under no pressure to retain the octane levels for the sake of scene pigeonholing, NTM open up windows of introspective noodling after the initial blast of energy, building up enticing layers of melody in "Whitewash" that immediately sets them apart from the pack. Good musicianship minus the pretension equals a quality new band and an immensely enjoyable album. /

LOCUS OF CONTROL TO A BLOODY WAR OR A SICKLY SEASON

ALPHA ENGINEERING

So they may have been playlisted on Bruce Dickinson's BBC RADIO 6 show, so they may have supported Goldfinger and The Bluetones—BIG DEAL! It still doesn't stop me wanting to slice off my own ears than listen to such irritatingly polished, angst-ridden nu-rock. The fact that they proudly use the term "angst-ridden" in their press release should be enough to ward off those reviewers with even an ounce of credibility. Jeez, this is bad. "Someone pray for me," whines vocalist Spen in "Red". Okay, I'll pray someone drops a bomb on your rehearsal room so that we can spare the further reaches of the rock world from your horrible, horrible tripe. Avoid (unless you like Maroon 5).

MY DEAF AUDIO ARE THE NEW BLACK EP BIVOUAC

Garage punk with a hefty dose of gutter-pop sleaze, My Deaf Audio are a band playing heavy on the current Scandinavian suavity, with all the groove, rhythm, and style to back it up. "Turn Off the World" wields the most potential, burning on a wick coated with The Killers ruthless charm, yet emanating a distinctly British bluster. Elsewhere, Misfits-esque melodies are bashed against rickety rock 'n' roll rhythms on "Communication" to give them a lovably reckless edge. Definitely a band to watch.

SKIRMISH THE CROOKED AND THE CAVALIER EP

LAST CHANCE/ENGINEER

Taking things back to the good old-skool melodic punk of 17 Stitches and Vision, Londoners Skirmish peddle something honest and passionate that's a rare commodity in today's Xfashion-coreX-centric scene. Bursting with energy and good, danceworthy beats, this is raucous enough to have you breaking a sweat just listening to it. "Thick as Thieves" is the choice track here, full of youthful exuberance and manic shout-along choruses. While it may be far from perfect technically and production-wise, such tracks mean they'll sure leave you out of breath by the end!

RAMESSES WE WILL LEAD YOU TO GLORIOUS TIMES EP DEVIL DOLL

The ex-Electric Wizard tag seems to have been harked from the rooftops prior to their recent U.K. jaunt with Boston noise-mongers 5ive; but despite the pummelling presence of Wizard drummer Mark, Ramesses come off as a much darker, doomier hybrid, with its roots sunk deep in the malevolence of the early sludge scene. Recorded by the legendary Billy Anderson (not that you can tell, with such poor production quality) these four tracks drill deep into a demonic lair of doom-laden riffs and demonic growls (although "Master Your Demons" shows vocalist Adam certainly isn't confined to such blasphemous vocals, beckoning dark spirits with his commanding, tuneful roar in its chorus). Those disillusioned by the latest Wizard incarnation may find respite here. Also contains two videos.

THE NOTHING COMA POEMS IN AT THE DEEP END

They may contain current and ex-members of the awesome Send More Paramedics and Labrat, but this initial recording from The Nothing makes for very disappointing listening. Recorded in just two days, COMA POEMS is predictable, by-the-book metal-core offering up very little in the way of originality or innovation (presumably not their intention, anyway). To me, though, this is nothing more than a fun metal-core side-project that will entertain no one outside their large circle of friends.

ty or innovation (presumably not their intention, anyway). To me, though, this is nothing more than a fun metal-core side-project that will entertain no one outside their large circle of friends.

VARIOUS

THE SHIT

PLAY DEAD RECORDINGS

In the world of punk rock, never has elitism been more rife than in the pages of the fanzines that help keep it alive. Punk police sergeants in the guise of columnists and reviewers constantly monitor the scene to ensure (their) rules are upheld; and PLAY DEAD, the U.K.'s largest free A5 zine, hasn't escaped their radar, taking knocks for its diverse coverage and commitment to music, not politics. But then, PD has never adhered to rules of any form—and this, their first compilation, exemplifies its refreshingly-diverse content, reflecting the intelligent tastes of those harbouring the punk spirit of progression, creativity, and passion—e.g., the Aphex-meets-Godspeed instrumentation of 65DAYSOFSTATIC and the metallic maelstrom of Beecher through to the post-core grooves of Jets vs Sharks and the frail indie of The Milwaukees. 16 tracks in all, and thoroughly enjoyable throughout!

CIRCUSACT

NO HISTORY, NO CONSEQUENCES MILLIEPEED

Following on from the promise shown on their demos, this is the incendiary debut seven-track EP from South Coast three-piece Circusact—and, as expected, it's some seriously good stuff. Rocking with all the originality and flair of a seasoned Dischord pro, NO HISTORY... is an engrossing musical journey through rich post-hardcore artistry and roughened, high-energy melodicism, guitars bristling and grating against the kind of tuneful groove that helped define the likes of Faraquet. It's still early, but Circusact definitely have the potential to take it far.

Review me punk.



A CHANGE OF PACE AN OFFER YOU CAN'T REFUSE IMMORTAL RECORDS

Just out of high school and loaded with emotion and talent, A Change of Pace is hitting the music scene with full force. AN OFFER YOU CAN'T REFUSE clearly showcases A Change of Pace's talent through melodic hardcore punk sounds and emotional lyrics. Lead singer Torry Jasper's vocals range in style from early New Found Glory to From Autumn to Ashes. Having recently signed to Immortal Records (the original stomping ground for both Incubus and Korn), A Change of Pace is speeding into success. If only we could all experience such success straight out of high school!

-Carley Charpentier



ACHILLES THIS AUTUMN BURNS SELF-RELEASED

Achilles try out a number of styles on THIS AUTUMN BURNS, which could mean one of two things: they're a very eclectic band, or they just haven't quite found their signature sound yet and aren't sure in which direction to go—which is fine for a young band. On various offerings, the Arizona-based band show much promise. Take, for instance, the one-two melodic hardcore punch of "High Energy" and "End of Days", the punked-up "No Limits", and especially the outstanding "Don't Hold Your Breath", whose urgent, tense tone and wonderful vocal harmonies make it the best composition of the 12-track album. They also try their hand at instrumental interludes, including the piano-driven "54:40". However, there also are some songs that warrant a skipping over, including the staid and dull "ballad" "New Horizon", the way-too-pop-for-its-own-good "Since Love Is Everlasting", and "The Vox". In the end, this marks a good, if a bit uneven, first outing.

-Janelle Jones



A DYING RACE POST VICTORY TIMES LONELY TREE

It's becoming more and more difficult to make it as a simple punk band these days. The truth of the matter is that no matter how fast you execute your palm mutes and how many beats your drummer can do with a single kick pedal, most of it has just simply been done before. Enter A Dying Race, whose name is a perfect indication of the music they play. Fans these days deserve more than just the usual political lyrics and some intense group vocals. Had this album been released in 1990, it would have been revolutionary. Unfortunately for them, we are living in 2005, and this brand of thrash/skate punk is just in need of a new flavor.

-Zac



ALSTON VOODOO FOR FUN AND PROFIT REPOSESSION RECORDS

I forgot how much I loved mid- to late-'90s modern rock like Third Eye Blind and 3 Doors Down. A mix of pop, attitude, and heavier rock form successfully to make VOODOO FOR FUN AND PROFIT a refreshing breath of air from today's predominantly rough sounds. With catchy love ballads like "Ordinary", this New York City-based four-man band creates a fresh sound fronted by the extraordinarily talented vocalist Kobia Jackson. Demonstrating a clear range of styles and talents, Alston also rips through cover of the Billy Idol favorite "Rebel Yell". Like Idol, Jackson puts gutsy meaning into lyrics "more, more, more"—and after listening to VOODOO FOR FUN AND PROFIT, I wouldn't expect anything less from this up-and-coming band.

-Carley Charpentier



AMERICAN STATIC SOUNDTRACK OF THE STRUGGLE STREET ANTHEM RECORDS

The working-class punk movement has another band to add to their compilation CD. American Static's first full-length album, SOUNDTRACK OF THE STRUGGLE, is jam-packed with street-punk anthems and working-class attitude. Previously known as The Roustabouts, American Static is taking to the streets after a name change and a song overhaul. Songs like "Poor and the Proud" and "Youth" offer listeners a labor-force punch of unsettling lyrics and a riotous noise to chant to.

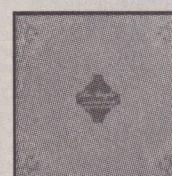
-Carley Charpentier



AMERICOPA MANTLE VOLUME 1 COMPILATION SUNSET ALLIANCE

This 16-song collection features nine of Arizona's best indie bands. AMERICOPA MANTLE has become a sort of musical collective to gather local bands and give them an opportunity to get the band's music out onto the national scene. There are some very promising young bands here, such as the sonic rock of Before Braille, the hillbilly-tinged bluegrass of Black Feet, and the prog leanings of Awake and Alert (with the esoteric Maya Peart on vocals). These bands also tour together and perform concerts to help fund the project. This a fantastic way to give some great bands the chance that the bloated record companies would rather waste on AMERICAN IDOL castoffs.

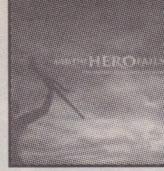
-Dug



AN ANGLE ...AND TAKE IT WITH A GRAIN OF SALT DRIVE-THRU

An Angle is one Drive-Thru's newest bands, and their debut album on the mogul label opens with an a capella introduction that tugs at your heartstrings and instantly makes you fall head over heels for lead singer Kris Anaya's voice. Not only that, but you'll instantly believe in what's to come with the rest of the album: an offering of indie folk rock bearing similarities to Bright Eyes and classics like Bob Dylan and The Violent Femmes. The orchestral harmonies and the warm folk undertones combine to produce a truly beautiful, inviting sound. www.ananglemusic.com

-tChow



AND THE HERO FALLS THE MISTAKE THAT COST THE WORLD GRAVES RECORDS

If you take a little Linkin Park and Tool and mix in some middle-rate screaming expressionism, and you got And the Hero Falls. Drummer Dustin Vaughn displays some serious chops throughout. The three-guitar/bass attack is, on occasion, very interesting...but for the most part this is pretty much tried-and-true idea that just annoy me enough to make THE MISTAKE THAT COST THE WORLD unlistenable. If the lack of originality doesn't bug you, there is lots of good instrumental work that is sure to please. For me, this style of hardcore/thrash/rock has been done to death—and that's why the hero falls: not enough original thought.

-H. Barry Zimmerman



ANNIHILATOR ALL FOR YOU THE END

Jeff Waters is revered as a virtuoso guitarist, yet Canada's Annihilator have rarely risen from its glory period of the early '90s. On the band's latest effort, the 10-track ALL FOR YOU, Waters decided to change up the lineup yet again, adding drummer Mike Mangini (Extreme, Steve Vai) and vocalist Dave Padden (Theory of a Deadman) to the fracas. The results are mixed at best: while tracks like "Bled" have a truly shredding instrumental part, the unmatched vocal delivery and sophomore lyrical content are both too contrived. Yet, the overall experimental vibe produced by Waters and company may not make for a settling or familiar listening experience, but is very spirited and while clumsy at times, covers musical ground like no other Annihilator album to date. And the riffs spit out by Waters, heard on the psycho-thrash of "Rage Absolute" and the sinister groove of "Demon Dance", are still badass, no matter who sings over them. Uneven, unexpected, but definitely not uneventful, ALL FOR YOU is a departure for the band, and is a real grab bag collection for the adventurous listener to absorb.

-Mike SOS



ANTHRAX THE GREATER OF TWO EVILS SANCTUARY

Unlike other bands that rip off its fans by releasing sub-par rehashed trash with a new studio cut which inevitably sucks or puts out a re-tracked collection of past glories with new mixes and Pro-Tools trickery, Anthrax started a web campaign to change it up a bit by actually (gasp) see what the band's fans wanted to hear. THE GREATER OF TWO EVILS is the result, and the rules are simple: the band listed all of its pre-John Bush era material on the site and encouraged the fans to vote for which songs would make the re-recorded release. Instead of treading the same old ground which automatically placed many of its peers in the nostalgia bin, the boys in Thrax put a new twist on an old theme (and recorded the whole deal in a two day span in a NYC studio to boot). John Bush's vocals put the badass stomp and delete the expiration date on many of these gems, while Rob Caggiano totally shreds out the Anthrax catalog as he wrote the riffs himself. 14 tracks that predate SOUND OF WHITE NOISE, classics like "Caught in a Mosh", "Indians", "Madhouse", and much more are here, thanks to the fans and their ballots. And of course, Anthrax, who never cease to challenge themselves or give its audience what it wants. Anthrax has set itself up to continue to be pioneers in the game for as long as they see fit.

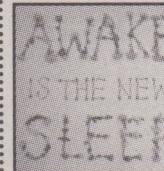
-Mike SOS



BEFORE BRAILLE BALANCE AND TIMING BAD NEWS BEAR RECORDS

This six-song EP from Mesa, AZ's phenomenal sonic/emo quartet Before Braille is a holiday release that sounds good the whole year long. Along with three of the band's signature, edgy, guitar-dominated anthems, this disc contains three "acoustic" tunes to showcase the lighter side of the band. Although the three hard-rocking songs are perfect college-radio airplay fodder, the softer songs, while not really true acoustic songs, are the best things on this disc. The band achieves a perfect, laid-back, Jackson Browne-type of resonance on the soft tunes. The holiday tie-in is achieved with the opening track, "Merry Christmas, I'm Cheating" and a later acoustic version of the same song (there called "Ex-mas Eve"). Much like the title of this disc, the band strikes a beautiful balance with this timeless release.

-Dug



BEN LEE AWAKE IS THE NEW SLEEP NEW WEST RECORDS

The sixth full-length release from Australian songwriter Ben Lee is sure to be a cult favorite. With a soulful interpretation of progressive pop-folk, Lee weaves together a tapestry of layered instruments to create his heartfelt tunes. He has progressed substantially from the "teen hero" status he was saddled with in his youth towards a mature and respected artist. Perhaps the biggest drawback on this album is the unbelievably slick production values. Such studio perfection often detracts from the emotion evident on a harsher mix. This may not be the album to propel Lee to star status in America, but after listening to the careful crafting of these tunes, one cannot help but be convinced that he will eventually hit the bull's eye and become a household name here.

-Dug



BEST OF WINTER OLALLA SELF-RELEASED

The best way to classify this music would be to jumble and mix the following bands together: Brand New, Fall Out Boy, Taking Back Sunday, Coheed and Cambria. That gives you a pretty solid idea of the style and make-up of Best of Winter. The music really doesn't branch out much beyond the comparisons mentioned above, but for some reason this album doesn't get old and tiring. Best of Winter deliver their songs precisely and energized, to say the least. The lead vocals of Corey Waring really push this release to its fullest and finest moments. Waring does a great job of spilling his emotions into the words without making the vocals sound forced and artificial. Coupled with above-average lyrics that at times are clever and at others too common, the perfect mix isn't there yet—but it's enough to give these guys some much-deserved admiration.

-David Walter

CDs are sweet.



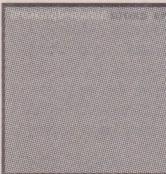
BOOBIE TRAP

DARKNESS FALLING / ONE NIGHT STAND DVD

JONESY FILMS

Featuring two live videos of Orange County punk band Boobie Trap, this promotional DVD offers little in terms of substance, both musical and otherwise. "Darkness Falling" is just paint-by-numbers California melodic hardcore, while "One Night Stand" sounds like a lost Lunachicks song without the sense of humor. (The comparison might have something to do with the fact that the lead singer heavily resembles Theo of Lunachicks) Aesthetically, there's not much to look at, either. Both videos are simply live shots, neither capturing the band's character or flair. Not worth a second viewing—or even a first, for that matter.

-Matthew Siblo



BREAKING BENJAMIN

SO COLD EP

HOLLYWOOD

Breaking Benjamin's latest five-track EP contains an acoustic version of the song you're sick of (*iSo Cold!*), two studio tracks, and two live cuts. Essential? Unless you're a huge fan, a 16 year-old girl, or want to document in full detail how a band can rip off Sevendust so well and still manage to sound like Simple Plan ("Ladybug"), it's not.

-Mike SOS



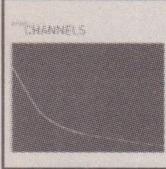
CAMPGROUND EFFECT

THE FLIGHT SEAT EP

LOCAL CANNERY

Can anyone remember that obscure band Nirvana? Campground Effect does. Maybe they take it as a compliment that they sound like Nirvana. I see it as having no individual self or imagination. Josh Kh is shamelessly doing Kurt vocally—so much so that at the end of THE FLIGHT SEAT EP I expected to hear him blow his own head off. But it's not just the vocals: the song structure, the tones, the entire damn thing just smells like teen spirit...except, of course, it's not nearly as good. The copycat acts never seem to understand that you will never be as good as the band you are imitating—and Campground Effect you will always be second-rate Nirvana. So please, stop it, or kill yourselves.

-H. Barry Zimmerman



CHANNELS

OPEN

DeSOTO RECORDS

If you are looking for a fresh breath of musical air, look no further than this release by Channels. This debut EP from singer/songwriter J. Robbins (formerly of Jawbox and Burning Airlines) is a masterpiece of six tracks that will be sure to please the indie kids out there. This release is harmoniously multifaceted and thought-provoking. The music is almost weird-sounding at times but also melodic. Robbins definitely is attempting to wow some out there and challenge others with his cunning and astute guitar work and out-of-the-ordinary time signatures. If anything, this album is invigorating and refreshing. Robbins is clearly on a mission with his musical madness. This album is without doubt bringing music to new heights of discovery and development.

-David Walter



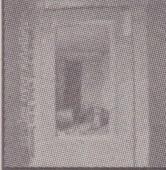
CHEAP SEX

HEADED FOR A BREAKDOWN

PUNKCORE

Cheap Sex is a street punk clan whose name is way more offensive than the band's 13-track offering laden with social commentary. This quartet play hard nosed, fast paced, and full of angst, choosing to lash out at the perils of American life from "Reality TV" to "Raped By the FCC" with both a distinct bark (thanks to the throat of Mikey Virus) and vicious bite. Featuring snarling guitars and a hearty vocal delivery, HEADED FOR A BREAKDOWN mixes the old school punk rock vibe with a touch of East Coast hardcore for a much-needed lesson in Punk Rock Sociology 101.

-Mike SOS



CIRCLES OVER SIDELIGHTS

WHAT IS AND WHAT IS TO BECOME

IMMIGRANT SUN

Through an odd and presumably long series of events, Circles Over Sidelights' WHAT IS AND WHAT IS TO BECOME somehow landed in my lap. I heard a demo mp3 of these guys about two years ago while browsing a metal message board. How do I remember that it was this band? Because they're amazing, that's how. Going from grind so fast and heavy it would make your grandmother weep to intense yet refined, clean bridges in a matter of seconds, you will partake on a journey from Normalville to Oddtown. Few bands can pull off eight-minute frenzies of highly distorted guitar and clean finger-picking while maintaining the listener's interest throughout. The best part is that they do it with style. Buy this album. I repeat: buy this album.

-Zac



CLOCKCLEANER

THE HASSSLER

MANIC RIDE

Putting the punk back into punk rock seems to be the Philadelphia trio Clockcleaner's mission statement, as this band is hellbent on creating organized chaos, both on and off stage. Known for outrageous antics like pissing on their fellow band's merch and getting into fights at any given time, these guys are hell bent to reclaim punk rock's dubious distinction of being against the grain. Luckily, the seven-tracks that comprise THE HASSSLER comply with the band's ideals: these tracks are loud, obnoxious, dissonant, jerky, and borderline dangerous. "Shingles", armed with a sloppily structured and dependent on attitude over accuracy, rocks like a Jesus Lizard song done by Nirvana, while the pounding bass line of "The Houseguest" leads the trail to noise rock luxury. Clockcleaner's anti-establishment musical stance and invigorating disregard for everything around them work well together, presenting an unsanctioned punk rock package firmly denouncing the mediocre mainstream.

-Mike SOS

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CRAZY MARY
THIRSTY FOR COOL
HUMSTING RECORDS

The seventh full-length release by this lo-fi, semi-psychadelic New York "garage band" is another voyage into seas most bands would rather not sail. Crazy Mary claims the moniker of "original NYC garage music," but this is a garage designed by Frank Gehry. The band's esoteric mix includes a horn section, fiddle, keyboards, and some yearning vocals from new vocalist Kristin Smith. The music is popular on college radio stations—probably because nobody knows what else to do with it. At times it sounds like upbeat swing, inner-city blues, folk rock, or vintage '80s new wave. This is an interesting band that packs small venues throughout New York City. Though this band would fit in with a wide variety of bands for a live show, don't look for them to move too far from those NYC roots. At least the locals know what they're in for.

-Dug



CTRL-ALT-DEL
SELF-TITLED
SELF-RELEASED

It looks like the radio metal trend has finally gone overseas into Europe. The album sounds like slow rapcore with no rap. The singer sounds like he came from the band Korn, and even has similar lyrical ability (i.e., dark and meaningless). Can someone please go tell the Europeans that it's not cool to rip off our crappy bands?! First they steal Madonna, and now this! What is this world coming to? While you're over in Europe, you can also please kill this band? Thank you.

-ADF



CULT OF LUNA
SALVATION
EARACHE

Sensational Swedish septet Cult of Luna returns with SALVATION, a gallant eight-track, 73-minute affair. Juxtaposing the ethereal vibe of Neurosis with the sonic crush of Isis, tracks like "Vague Illusions" morph from aggressive bits of vocal shrapnel to atmospheric guitar interludes. While some may argue that the album is overall weighty and overwrought, tracks like the bone chilling "White Cell" showcase just how mighty Cult of Luna can be when the death metal world meets the prog rock realm in a battle for earth shaking metal's coveted crown. As Axl Rose once sang, you just need "a lil' patience" (and perhaps some good drugs), to fully appreciate the Gothic doom and metallic mope which Cult of Luna pristine deliver.

-Mike SOS



DARK TRANQUILLITY
CHARACTER
CENTURY MEDIA

If there's one thing that can make any music fan happy, it's when you expect an album to be nothing short of perfection, and somehow, somehow it's even better than you could have imagined. Such is the case with the latest from Dark Tranquillity, CHARACTER. Much is always to be expected from the band that pioneered the famed "Gothenburg sound" of melodic metal, but DT has raised the bar with every release since, PROJECTOR. Some Swedish bands chose to water down their latest releases in order to reach a greater American audience. DT did exactly the opposite and wrote songs that echo of the truly amazing history of death metal. Insanely inventive and beautifully composed, every song on CHARACTER screams of dynamic energy unlike any album since the once great In Flames' JESTER RACE. Any metal fan should get this album, as its appeal is blatantly obvious. In a time where the metal scene needs heroes, Dark Tranquillity has stepped up and gotten the job done.

-Zac



DARKTHRONE
SARDONIC WRATH
THE END

Norway's black metal masters Darkthrone have returned with a raw, stripped down black metal assault with SARDONIC WRATH. While many of the other bands in the genre are trying to out-style each other, this demonic duo puts away the make up case and sweats in the studio, pounding away at nine tracks bursting with simple yet massively effective aggression. Songs like the battle march ode "Straightening Sharks in Heaven" and the near-hardcore punk anthem "Hate is the Law" maintain a bleak feel and hypnotic groove throughout, loading in just as much impact as the new school's technically rich batch of tunes. Not losing any of its ominous feel, Darkthrone's crawling rhythms and trance-like riffs meld the doom, black, death, and punk genres into one evil entity capable of any bad thing you could possibly muster. While other bands may play faster and look scarier, no one actually strips it down to the bare bones of fear quite like Darkthrone, the death metal version of AC/DC and Motorhead when it comes to sheer reliability.

-Mike SOS



DEFIANCE
RISE OR FALL
PUNKCORE

Hailing from Portland, Oregon, Defiance's 10-track release is a proud punk rock proclamation, as RISE OR FALL showcases these mohawked menaces and their loud brand of straightforward punk rock. Tracks like the melodic crunch of "Doing What You're Told" and the Rancid-esque "Still Got Fuck All" expertly capture the desperate angst of youth across the globe, while the meat and potatoes punk rock of "Screwed Up" meshes the So Cal and UK style into a punk rock power punch. Looking for the real deal without the women's jeans and whiny vocals? RISE OR FALL is a good place to start.

-Mike SOS

DIESTO
DOOMTOWN 7
ELASTIC RECORDS



Does anyone remember the old D.F.L. records? They were that really crappy thrash-punk band that nobody cared about in the late 1990s. Well, if D.F.L. were to have released a metal album, then this would've been it. Diesto plays groove-style metal that churns out muffled guitar and hard-core punk vocals. You can file this under noisecore. The album definitely sounds like something Volcom would release.

-ADF

DISTRICT

DON'T MESS WITH THE HARD PUNK
PEOPLE LIKE YOU

Despite hailing from Germany, District could pass for an old school British punk band, right down to the sneering vocals on "Goodbye Chastity", gang choruses that pervade "Pop Stars", and biting melodic guitars all over this disc. In fact, this 13-track, 32 minute release is the most retro punk rock album you'll hear this year barring a Sex Pistols reunion. District really rips off the seminal UK punk rock bands, but they do it so well, you won't even care, just as long as they keep writing tunes with the attitude of "Telephone Song" and "My Baybee Number".

-Mike SOS

DOGS DIE IN HOT CARS
PLEASE DESCRIBE YOURSELF



One can't help but understand immediately the comparisons between Dogs Die in Hot Cars and some of the best bands of the '80s (e.g., XTC, Talking Heads) through their use of upbeat guitars, organ, and low European vocals. Quirky, playful, and eccentric, their debut album is filled with three-and-a-half-minute pop songs that are sure to get stuck in your head. "I love you! I love you! I love you!

/ I love you 'cause I have to!" chants the entire band in their best track, titled "I Love You 'Cause I Have to". The album is filled with similar humorous songs, such as "Paul Newman's Eyes" and "Who Shot the Baby?". However, unlike their '80s idols, Dogs Die in Hot Cars are strictly fun and lack the feeling of being something entirely special and significant in music.

-Norberto Gomez, Jr.

DOWNTOWN BROWN
DOWNTOWN BROWN
CHOCOLATE STAIN



Quirky would be a compliment to give to this eclectic Detroit trio whose 13-track endeavor runs the gamut from the epic power metal of "Welcome to the Acropolis" to the funky melody of "Orange Bitch", to the silly sappiness of "Mangina". Downtown Brown throws convention, genre, and sometimes good taste out the window, but always retain its virtuoso musical ability, as the massive range of music covered here (despite the comical nature of much of the lyrics) is a marvel to behold. Well, that and the Lorenzo Lamas cover "Smooth Talker". Teetering on the fine line between stupid and clever, Downtown Brown's undeniable musicianship and tongue in cheek sense of humor puts them in the league of bands like Mr. Bungle, NOFX, and Gwar, where the listener isn't sure if the joke is on us or them. Whichever the case, be prepared to laugh, rock, be grossed out, but above all, be thoroughly entertained.

-Mike SOS

ELEVATOR DIVISION
YEARS
SECOND NATURE

Elevator Division is a quartet of pansies from Kansas City who actually admit to not only listening to Coldplay but being influenced by them, as well. Their debut album YEARS offers 10 tracks of somber, wishy-washy indie rock made by guys who want to sound depressed but probably aren't. This is slowly-strummed guitars mangled by feedback and a barely competent drummer illiterate lyrics about, well, the usual: chicks and stuff. More "Every Rose Has Its Thorn" than "Girls, Girls, Girls", if you know what I mean.

-jxk.



ETHAN DANIEL DAVIDSON
FREE THE ETHAN DANIEL DAVIDSON 5
TIMES BEACH RECORDS

Born in a Michigan commune to a family of anarchists, adopted by a wealthy Republican family, and now living most of his life on the road with his guitar and a song catalog reminiscent of Woody Guthrie, Ethan Daniel Davidson gives one faith in America. On this release, the 14 tracks touch on diverse socio-political issues, such as coal pollution, war, jingoism, and the price of CDs. Yet with a boatload of issues such as these floating through this album, Davidson still finds time to write a few pretty love songs to toss in the mix. This is a beautiful album that haunts the listener with unforgettable melodies and poignant lyrics. During his travels, Davidson has handed out nearly 50,000 free CDs. With the talent and maturity he and his band demonstrate on this album, it's about time he got paid for this stuff. Dylan, Seeger, and Fogelberg, eat your hearts out.

-Dug



FRANKLIN DELANO
LIKE A SMOKING GUN IN FRONT OF ME
FILE THIRTEEN RECORDS

Prog meets folk on this bizarre release from Bologna, Italy's new-millennium quartet, Franklin Delano. There is a lot of strange distortion here mixed with some slow, bluesy folk tunes with very nice male and female vocals. This could be one of the strangest studio releases ever. The band thinks nothing of playing a five-minute space/folk song and capping it with a single, distorted hum that echoes for two minutes until the next tune. Listening to this album is similar to watching a foreign film: you never know what the fuck will happen. With focus groups and budgetary concerns, it is amazing that a Chicago label like File Thirteen Records had the balls to record and release this disc. This may not be a best-seller, but it is art in its truest form: weird, honest, and eclectic.

that's what you get for jumping on the bed.



GENGHIS TRON
CLOAK OF LOVE
CRUCIAL BLAST

The first impression you get from the first thirty seconds of CLOAK OF LOVE will most likely be "What the hell is this? And that's fine, because the death metal techno dance party has just begun. Juxtaposing grinding core metal riffs with ambient techno grooves, this upstate NY trio's sonic output is jarring, mind bending, and inexplicably delicious.

Despite the short length of this disc (only five tracks), there's enough sounds cascading throughout tracks like "Arms" and "Laser Bitch" to keep your ears occupied for quite a long time. If Mindless Self Indulgence, DJ Shadow, and Pig Destroyer were locked in a studio, this may be the result. Genghis Tron's massive musical assault is surely not an easy listen, but it's definitely something you'll remember long after it's over.

-Mike SOS



**GLORY OF THIS
ADORATION**
INDIANOLA RECORDS

A Cinderella story of a few concert-winners asked to live their dreams and join the 2003 Vans Warped Tour. All that, and the CD isn't bad, either. There is radio-pop potential here, but also glimpses of an underground mean streak. The most savage that this album has to offer might be "The Fear That Gave Me Wings", the song that kicks off the album. GOT are talented and worth a listen. I am especially curious to see what happens with the second album. Will they improve? Or perhaps their second album will be crap and flop like Reveille did a few years back, disappointing the hell out of me?

-Thomas Murray



GOLDEN GROPER VOL. 1
V/A

GOLD STANDARD LABORATORIES

This compilation is branded as the album with "18 California bands that you won't see on the Warped Tour." Well, there is a very good reason for that, my friends: none of these bands are very good or very special. Out of all those bands, there wasn't one band that made me want to check out any other of their music. Compilations should offer a reason for you to dive further into the bands featured on the release, and this release featured not one speck of that. This compilation also offers very little diversity, which made the release grow very old very quickly. If this release shows anything, it's that California is full of bands who definitely won't be playing the Warped Tour very soon because they are simply very bad.

-David Walter



GOLDFINGER
DISCONNECTION NOTICE
MAVERICK

Buzz is that Goldfinger have grown up. Their singer is a veggie-vegetarian something or other who spouts off about his political views and runs around with Good Charlotte. And the promo disc Maverick sent (which won't play in my car stereo) is specially watermarked to prevent any "illegal" dissemination of the CD to my friends (I'm glad they give me that much credit). The new album is a mixture of poppy, punky, incredibly listenable songs that unleash the band from the ska-punk prankster stigma that plagued them for so long with high record sales. Instead, we see the band as adults singing about the emptiness of getting wasted (the first single, "Wasted") and the, uh, size of their feelings (apparently they're "Ocean Size"). I didn't like Goldfinger before this disc, but I often find myself listening to it and humming along (only not in my car).

-jck.



GREENLIGHT PROMISE
IN A MIRROR THAT LIED THE TRUTH
SELF-RELEASED

Greenlight Promise is a four-piece band from Trenton, NJ. Even though the recent success of the indie film GARDEN STATE brought a level of coolness to the state, New Jersey is still kind of lame. Greenlight Promise does not do much to break that mold. There's just too much reverb on the guitar and too much of a spacey feel to the vocals and music in general. It is a weak offering of alt-rock and not worth checking out.

-tChow



GUNS UP
ALL THIS IS
1917

Guns Up is an explosive youth crew hardcore quintet that arrives via the burgeoning Massachusetts underground scene. The outfit's latest nine-track visceral assault on both your eardrums and conscience contains all of the nuances you'd expect from a hardcore troupe barely of age to buy beer: tight breakdowns, yelped vocal cries, and tons of buzzsaw guitar riffs mixed together into under three-minute snippets of aggression. Liberally claiming the slugfest NYHC sound as its own (especially on the Madball-esque "Foolin' Who"), Guns Up exhibit the kind of lineage that could take the band out of Haverhill, MA and onto bigger and better things.

-Mike SOS



GWAR
WAR PARTY
DRT ENTERTAINMENT

GWAR hasn't released an album of new material in three years. I can honestly say the wait was well worth it. With WAR PARTY, GWAR reunited with Glen Robinson, who produced AMERICA MUST BE DESTROYED. If you're hoping to hear the amusing punk-rock songs that were laced throughout CARNIVAL OF CHAOS and WE KILL EVERYTHING, you'll be sadly disappointed. WAR PARTY picks up where VIOLENCE HAS ARRIVED left off, as GWAR returns to intense metal. While most people don't take this band seriously because of their costumes and subject matter, as musicians and performers GWAR are top notch. This album shows off some of the best guitar and drum work I've heard from GWAR in a very long time. This is GWAR doing what they do best: songs filled with dark humor, gore, and social satire.

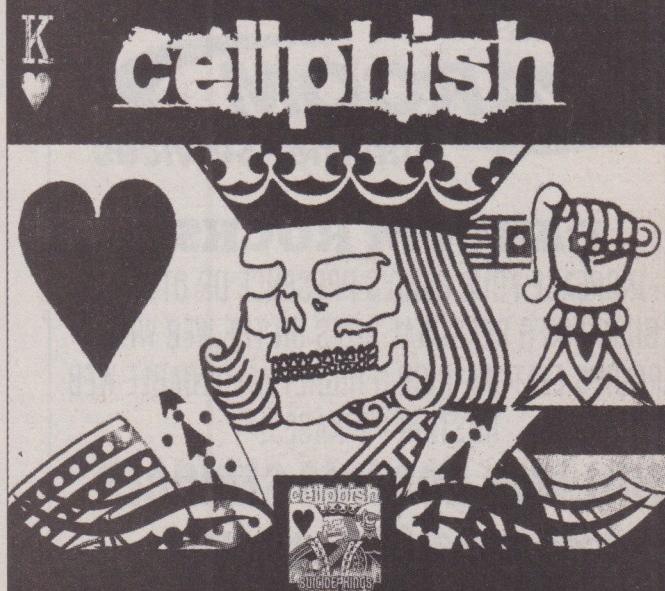
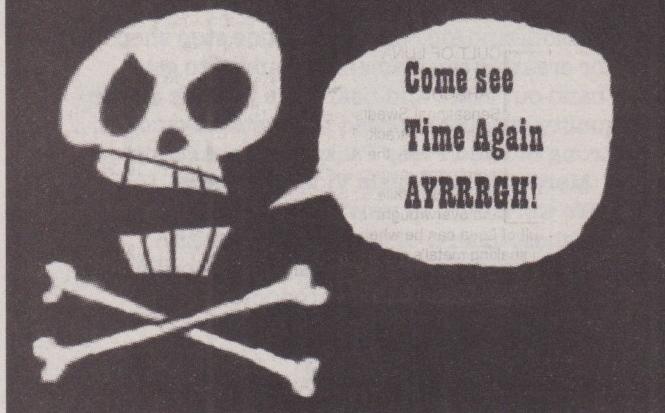
-Dane Jackson

-Dug



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HALIFAX
A WRITER'S REFERENCE
DRIVE-THRU RECORDS

Before I go any further, I need to let you all know this is a re-release. If you already have the No Milk Records' release of A WRITER'S REFERENCE, the only difference here is an acoustic bonus track and remastering. But for those of you who don't have this EP, read on. At times, Halifax sounds like a generic pop-punk band à la the majority of the Drive-Thru Records roster; but on tracks like "I Hate Your Eyes", Halifax shows it actually has some talent. Unfortunately, besides the track I just mentioned, the rest of the album sounds like homogenized emo pop-punk. Oh, well, you can't win them all.

-Dane Jackson



HANZEL UND GRETYL
SCHEISSMESSIAH
METROPOLIS RECORDS

If you paid attention to the MORTAL COMBAT: ANNIHILATION soundtrack, then you may recall that this band had a track featured in the movie. This is probably one of the easiest records I've ever come across in terms of being able to describe the style: the group plays creepy German industrial metal in the vein of Rammstein. This is creepy shit you should check out if you're into industrial with hints of black metal.



HEADDRIVE
SECOND COMING
IN THE EYE ENTERTAINMENT

I am personally sick of the growling/screaming vocals. And while there are some isolated moments where lead voxman Daniel Kresty is actually singing—and he can sing with balls—he chooses to mainly scream and sound like one of the million angry dudes doing that. Also, it bugs me to no end when bands do two almost identical versions of the same song and put in parentheses, "Radio Edit." If you want to say "fucking" in a song, have the nuts for that to be what you said and that's that. Don't pussy-boy around and cover your bases—especially when you need special equipment to understand what in the hell you are saying to begin with. These two complaints add up making HEADDRIVE just not enough band to think for themselves—or for you to invest time in.

-H. Barry Zimmerman



HEARTS OF HEROES
FREE FROM SIN AND DEATH
SELF-RELEASED

Hearts of Heroes has the potential to be a great band. As the songs on this EP show, the band is still a bit rough around the edges. Fortunately, the guys in Hearts of Heroes have talent—and that's half the battle. The music on this EP is one part metal, one part hardcore, and one part AFI rip-off. The songs are a bit on the darker side, but they're also surprisingly catchy (especially the chorus of "Crimson Red"). Once these guys work on the arrangements and trimming down some of the songs, they'll have a very solid album. Until then, FREE FROM SIN AND DEATH is a great start that leaves you hope for the future. This is a great up-and-coming band.

-Dane Jackson



HELMET
SIZE MATTERS
INTERSCOPE

Page Hamilton has embarked on a comeback with SIZE MATTERS, but, like Dave Mustaine, he keeps the band name yet changes the entire lineup sans himself. Armed with Frank Bello (Anthrax), John Tempesta (White Zombie), and Chris Traynor (Orange 9MM), the '04 Helmet lineup reads like the New York Metal All-Star team, yet gone are the pummeling offerings of days gone by. Instead, Helmet opts to take away the hammer and replace it with a chisel, fine tuning many of the album's tracks with the greatest of care. Tracks like "See You Dead", while still retaining the unabashed heavy-handed punch you'd expect, is ultimately overshadowed by the most melody the band has displayed to date. And while you'd normally expect the fillings in your head to rattle after a few tracks, it's not the rhythms that are jagged anymore. Instead, it's in the lyrics: the roaring disdain, utter disgust, and discontented dissonance that made Hamilton's guitar roar and the band's rhythm section sonically challenge any room they played in are found in songs like "Enemies", "Speak and Spell", and "Smart". Showcasing a darker, damning, and all together more sinister side to Hamilton's brain, these words attack with the impact of past album's bass and drum explosions, while the sinewy alt metal jazz grooves laid down beside it all keep it both heavy and smart throughout the entire 11-track experience. Is it the Helmet of old? No way, but it is a band full of vitriol, primed to reclaim its pole position in the metal genre.

-Mike SOS



HERMOSA DRIVE
ANOMALY
GRAVE 9 RECORDS

Hermosa Drive is selling themselves as five troubled youths (typical). And I personally think that "ANOMALY" is a pretentious album title. And lead singer Andrew Pringle is not doing anything original: his vox style is demon voice, then pretty as the boy next door. But Hermosa Drive's music is so tight and creative that you cannot help but like ANOMALY. Guitarists Mike Clombo and Joe Boning are young axe gods in the making. These two are worth the price of admission. Track 1, "Curse the Midnight Sky", is a slow, dramatic piece that is so well arranged and interesting, with cool time changes, nice piano work, and shredder axe work deluxe. This song is full of all the elements that make Hermosa Drive a standout band. ANOMALY, a great debut effort.

-H. Barry Zimmerman

my CD is lovely.

HER SPACE HOLIDAY
THE YOUNG MACHINES
MUSH RECORDS

This is the latest installment in the musical autobiography of Marc Bianchi, a boy with a history of eating disorders, substance abuse, etc., who fell in love with a girl named Keely and took to expressing himself quite plainly in song. In our last episode, MANIC EXPRESSIVE (which this writer absolutely loves), Keely had become literally integrated into Marc's music, and life seemed to be going relatively well. On THE YOUNG MACHINES, however, "This has been my hardest year": Keely is gone, grandmother has died, some music critics have both gotten personal and rather missed the point, etc. All of this has led to another lovely album of staccato trip-hop beats, Cure-ish repetition and overtone, intricate-yet-organic programming (this time incorporating orchestral textures), and a simple monotonous quality that serves to highlight the genuineness of the project. Additionally, while Bianchi's lyrics were always raw (as in an open wound), they've gone from almost sim-ply-minded plain on HOME IS WHERE YOU HANG YOURSELF to simply plain on MANIC EXPRESSIVE to cleverly plain here.

-Gregory Moore

HIDDEN IN PLAIN VIEW
LIFE IN DREAMING
DRIVE-THRU RECORDS

To me, Hidden in Plain View is no different than the emo-pop bands that have polluted the music scene with their incessant yelling, bad fashion, whiny group vocals, and hordes of pre-teen fans. I tried to give this band a fair shake, but by the third song on the album I wasn't sure if I was listening to Hidden in Plain View or Taking Back

Sunday. While I'm not trying to sound like an elitist, I liked this album better in 2002 when Taking Back Sunday did it. I think it's safe to say that after three years, the whole emo-pop thing has been wearing thin. Everything new just sounds like a regurgitation. Is it too much to ask for something innovative or creative to come out of this scene? But if you happen to appreciate this type of music, Hidden in Plain View should definitely be on your radar as a band you'll enjoy.

-Dane Jackson

JET
FAMILY STYLE
ATLANTIC

All rock that is worthwhile stands on the shoulders of such '60s and '70s giants as The Rolling Stones, The Who, and AC/DC. Occasionally since then we have heard glimpses of the same undeniable spirit. Such an example was The Cult Electric, and now another is Jet Family Style. This excellent concert DVD is the type of thing that makes you glad to have a huge plasma TV hooked up to a killer sound system...or it may make you rush out to buy one. The DVD includes a tour documentary and several videos.

-Tom "Tearaway" Schulte

JON OLIVA'S PAIN
TAGE MAHAL
SPV

A legend in his own time, Jon Oliva has broken as much ground for the metal scene as anybody, and has done so in such a personal and unique fashion. Drawing in memories of his stupendous work in Savatage and his collaboration with the Trans-Siberian Orchestra, his new solo project seems to know no boundaries, as he has applied the use of woodwinds and genius orchestration to already fantastically arranged metal anthems. Every track brings new surprises, every song offers an interesting twist, and it all seems so fresh for a genre that has been around for decades. Particularly interesting is the use of backup vocals—not to drown out Oliva's magnificent voice, but to complement it in a majestic manner. I'd consider this to be one of the best metal albums of the past five years—something I say that with a lot of confidence. Don't miss out!

-Zac

JOSH SMALL
SELF-TITLED
POP FACTION

This bluegrass-themed release from Richmond's banjo-picking troubadour, Josh Small, is a strangely disjointed disc that should have been left in the studio until it matured. While there are a few nice banjo and steel-guitar melodies on this album, most of the material sounds as if it was thrown together in a drunken one-night binge. Neil Young was able to pull it off on TONIGHT'S THE NIGHT, but Small is no Young. His pathetic stab at humor with the tired lyrics of the second song on this disc, "Fall Motherfuckers Fall", throws off the entire album. The third tune, "Setting Up", is a poignant, beautiful piece that is only poisoned by the song before it. Small has talent, but it doesn't shine through like it should on a debut album.

-Dug

KASABIAN
SELF-TITLED
RCA

Overtly influenced by Happy Mondays and The Stone Roses...but hey, cut them some slack, because, unlike the glut of annoying Brit-pop bands invading your town, these guys are actually from the U.K. And they sound pretty damn good, too, nailing that swirl Brit-pop production sound that made careers out of much lesser bands. The pleasurable vocal lines are here, that throbbing rhythm section pulse, and the overall feeling of happy, shiny British people. Funny how Brit-pop never sounds downtrodden or bleak—almost the complete opposite of the English doldrums we are always hammered with. If Kasabian are any indication, the Brits are content to keep pumping out the feel-good pop bands that North America sorely lacks. Next big thing?

-Jason Schreurs

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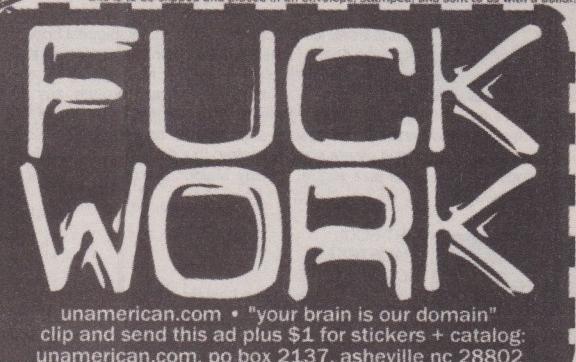
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punk rock is in your pants.



KILL YOUR IDOLS FROM COMPANIONSHIP TO COMPETITION SIDE ONE DUMMY

Kill Your Idols is a long running NY hardcore punk troupe whose latest 15-track CD exemplifies hardcore in the truest sense. Relentless and unforgiving, KYI attack your ears like a bulldozer leveling a building, leaving nothing behind in its wake. Angst ridden and devastatingly merciless, this veteran band works from the foundation of bands like Poison Idea, Sick of It All, and Cro-Mags, and puts its definitive stamping on tracks like "15 Minutes" and the aptly titled "Only Dicks Don't Like Black Flag", creating a maelstrom full of fierce riffs and a flurry of furious rhythms. Quite possibly the most crushing hardcore punk record you'll hear from a band currently active, **FROM COMPANIONSHIP TO COMPETITION** is a failsafe album capable of mass destruction and finds Kill Your Idols not only at the top of its game, but on top of the hardcore genre as well.

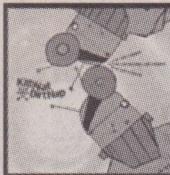
-Mike SOS



KING'S X LIVE ALL OVER THE PLACE METAL BLADE

Hard to believe, but after 23 years of underground accolades with minimal but effective mainstream exposure, the veritable hard rock workhorse known as King's X have yet to release a live album. Until now, that is, as **LIVE ALL OVER THE PLACE** chronicles a plethora of live shows (some dated back to 1994) on a twin disc collection guaranteed to put you in the crowd of the Texas trio's captivating gig. Featuring an acoustic and two electric sets chock full of quality rock performed with all the skill you'd expect from Ty Tabor, Doug Pinnick, and Jerry Gaskill, the 25-track album is as close as you can get to the band responsible for such rock staples as "Over My Head", "Dogman", and "Summerland". Want to experience being in the front row at a King's X show without leaving your room? **LIVE ALL OVER THE PLACE** flawlessly delivers that experience, with some surprises (like a jam on Hendrix's "Manic Depression" with Jeff Ament of Pearl Jam) to boot.

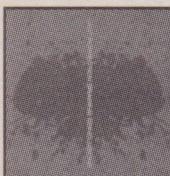
-Mike SOS



KITTYKAT DIRTNAP I AM A ROBOT, I AM TALKING LIKE A ROBOT, I AM A ROBOT WONKA VISION RECORDS

The debut release from this Philadelphia-based quintet is a comic sing-along that pairs the earnest vocals of guitarist Adam Eckhoff and the melodic stylings of keyboardist Robyn Montella. The male/female vocals work pretty well on the nine upbeat synth-pop songs on this disc. While the band has a propensity for a way too long album title and parentheses in every song title, there is enough humor on this disc to keep it entertaining. Song titles like "(If I Had a Purse I Would Carry) Breath Mints (in It Too)" and "(Getting Caught Enjoying) Phil Collins" should give you some idea of this band's direction. One of the biggest drawbacks of this album is that the band sticks too tightly to its scripted sound, thus causing most of the songs to sound quite similar. There's lots of humorous promise here, if the band can just vary its material a bit.

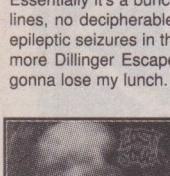
-Dug



LAST PERFECTION DRAWING CONCLUSIONS UNITED EDGE

Sorry, folks, not a lot here to grasp on to. Instead, we get metalcore producer extraordinaire Kurt Ballou slumming it just a wee bit with yet another generic hardcore/metal band. My biggest bone of contention with these bands is their insistence on hammering us to death with as many ideas as possible without ever really giving us anything to hold dear or even to remember halfway through any given "song."

-Jason Schreurs



LOST SOUL CHAOSTREAM WICKED WORLD

Polish death metal troupe Lost Soul may not be reinventing the wheel on **CHAOSTREAM**, but the quartet sure are getting the most mileage possible by displaying some dazzling death metal chops. "Godstate" takes the evil of Cryptopsy and throws in some Meshuggah-esque time signature madness in for good measure, while the foreboding dirge "Christian Meat" features the maximum amount of sludge allowed by a death metal band, churning out a six-minute epic. Technically sound and unmistakably devastating, **CHAOSTREAM** is a veritable addition to your death metal collection, fitting in somewhere between Zyklon and fellow countrymen Vader.

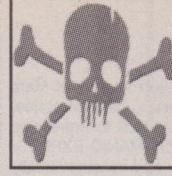
-Mike SOS



MANUOK SELF-TITLED LOUD AND CLEAR RECORDS

Manuok's self-titled album is an album that you pop in when you're trying to relax, fall asleep, or if you simply want background noise. For the most part, each track on this album is very lo-fi. At its hardest, this album has slight hints of acid jazz and heavier acoustic-guitar music. Despite its lo-fi leanings, the songs on this album are very distinctly orchestral, with piano and cello accompaniment. While most of the songs are essentially background noise Manuok show off some of its rock sensibility with songs like "Flowers for Algernon". All in all, this is a great release to relax to (but you might look awkward blaring it in your car).

-Dane Jackson



MARK DIGNAM BOX HEART MAN TIMES BEACH RECORDS

The fourth full-length release (and first on Times Beach Records) from Dublin, Ireland's soulful street poet Mark Dignam is a soft, reflective work in the vein of early Van Morrison. At times, the songs are nearly somnambulant, as they devolve slowly into a dreamlike trance. Then, suddenly, Dignam jars the listener back to the present with an upbeat, Billy Bragg-type folk-rock number. Politics and passion play hand in hand on this release, as Dignam bares his heart and then his soul on these earnest anthems. This may not be the album to make him a headliner, but Dignam certainly serves notice on this disc that he is one of the greatest Irish folksingers of his generation.

-Dug



MEANS BY RED GRACE LONELY TREE RECORDS

During the first 45 seconds of "Snatch me from the fire", a member of Means earnestly dedicates **BY RED GRACE** to Jesus Christ and proclaims "our lives have changed with God." While such a bold announcement is something that could potentially turn off a lot of people, I found this declaration to be the most interesting and bold statement on the entire record. Lengthy and repetitive, **BY RED GRACE** sounds similar to many other contemporary punk/metal outfits (such as Open Hand). The difference lies in Means' murky production and monotone vocals, which sound flatter than a punctured basketball. By all means, stick with those prayers, guys.

-Matthew Siblo



MIDNIGHT LASERBEAM A DEATH IN THE DISCOTHEQUE MATTRESS RECORDS

From the second the album begins, emotion oozes out of the speakers, word by word. Synthesized drums, bells, and whispered backup vocals add to the dark feel of **A DEATH IN THE DISCOTHEQUE**. The syncopated beats and chaotic sound effects give a dramatic orchestrated feel to each song. If each album had a color, this one would be black with silver sequins. Reflections of light bounce off each beat, while the overall feel for the CD is dark and bears heavily on the total emotion of the album. While I'm normally not one for the electro-emo, **Midnight Laserbeam** is on to something with **A DEATH IN THE DISCOTHEQUE**.

-Carley Charpentier



MIDWEST BLUE ALARM CLOCK JOHANN'S FACE RECORDS

The generic brand of pop, melodic punk rock can become very blah and plain when so many bands out there are aiming for that sound. **Midwest Blue** definitely falls into this category. Unfortunately, **Midwest Blue** has decided to call it quits, killing any hope of improvement with age that I feel was just in reach for them. While the music is ultra-catchy and filled with melodies, the structure is too predictable and too played-out by now, although they do play their instruments extremely clean and tight. It's a shame these guys broke up, because they were definitely on to something. I guess we will never know what **Midwest Blue** could have been.

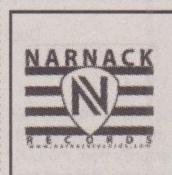
-David Walter



MUNLY AND THE LEE LEWIS HARLOTS MUNLY AND THE LEE LEWIS HARLOTS ALTERNATIVE TENTACLES

Munly and the Lee Lewis Harlots is an eclectic country and western act whose 15-track release is anything but run of the mill. Led by a member of the radical country act Slim Cessna's Auto Club, Munly and crew expose a love affair with dark music, folk rock and Americana, and manage to combine the three, creating an enthralling listening experience. Creepy, atmospheric, and stunningly performed, there's a definitive Gothic texture to tracks like "My Second Salvation Army Choir" and the shuffling "Ragin' Cajun" that give off a Nick Cave/Peter Murphy meets Chris Isaak and Neil Diamond vibe via the rested soul of Mr. Johnny Cash. Profound and prolific, tracks like the sweet banjo pick of "A Gentle Man's Jihad" and the hypnotic string arranged "River Fortkine Tippecanoe" are just a few of masterfully arranged and incredibly well textured songs here, as the verbose instrumentation (thanks to the string section and wide array of vocal pitches used) further enhance the already stoic listening experience. This disc is boundless work of genius and needs to be heard to believe.

-Mike SOS



NARNACK RECORDS IS... A FIST FIRST SAMPLER OF NEW MUSIC NARNACK RECORDS

If you like your rock served up weird (like I do), this sampler from Narnack Records is for you. 21 tracks in 70 minutes featuring some super cool groups, including The Fall, Coachwhips, Lil Pocketknife, Guitar Wolf, Bunnybrains, and Yellow Swans. For the most part, the songs featured are noisy and rocking with balls and an interesting spin. I was blown away with the quality and consistency. And the kicker is that Narnack Records (www.narnackrecords.com) is selling this gem for less than \$7. I love this disc. It is so weird and cool that you must have it. Go now and order it. Narnack Records is trying to make your life more interesting. Let them.

-H. Barry Zimmerman

CDs are my friends.



NECRO THE PRE-FIX FOR DEATH PSYCHO+LOGICAL

Can gangsta rap and death metal mix? After enduring the 71 minutes of New York rapper Necro's *THE PRE-FIX FOR DEATH* (featuring guest spots by members of Hatebreed and Obituary), the answer remains unclear. Moments seem to gel, like the raging chorus work of Jamey Jasta (Hatebreed) in "Push It to the Limit", but some of the other metal/rap efforts dive-bomb. Did we really need to hear the Obituary dudes take another stab at rap (remember "Bulletuary")? The brain-dead "Insaneology", featuring a non-vocal-effected John Tardy, only reminds us of how ineffectual Obituary is in 2004. On Necro's solo tracks, things tend to get ugly, a serial killer/rapist vibe played out with any irony lost in embarrassing postures and lyrical posing. Granted, this shit ain't my bag to begin with, but it would be interesting to run it past a hardcore N.W.A., Onyx, or Geto Boys fan and see what they think.

-Jason Schreurs



NEW CRASH POSITION MUSIC TO ROB BANKS TO HANDOUT RECORDS

With today's music industry producing and promoting everything and anything remotely punk, it's great to find a band withstanding the hype and playing music true to its roots. Resembling such timeless bands as Stone Temple Pilots and Tool, New Crash Position rocks hard with an alternative feel. Songs like "Save" and "Sugarmouth" leave the listener singing along with catchy choruses and admiring lead singer Jawn McElroy's versatile vocal capabilities. This foursome of musicians came together after all separately experimenting with different rock ventures. With a rough attitude and a rocking sound, New Crash Position is definitely poised for success.

-Carley Charpentier



NINE KILLING ANGELS DEATHWISH

Swedish melodic death metallers Nine wield a mighty riff, aptly displayed on the 10-track release *KILLING ANGELS*. Melding the unlikely tandem of the low end of Entombed, the savagery of Carcass, and the raw rock release of The Hellacopters, tracks like the blistering opener "Inferno" contain demonic grooves that only a well-versed Swedish outfit could muster. Bold choruses and over the top vocals are some of Nine's strong suits, as songs with the deathrock feel of "The Strategy of Fear" and the QOTSA meets The Haunted onslaught of "Discontent O.D." are laden with such attributes. Twisting the metal, stoner, and rock genres into its own concoction, *KILLING ANGELS* is sonically solid and provides a righteous listening experience to those that enjoy the sounds of a true example of crossover metal.

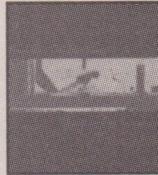
-Mike SOS



NONE MORE BLACK LOUD ABOUT LOATHING SABOT PRODUCTIONS

This EP will tide over None More Black fans until the Fat Wreck Chords full-length release later this year. The raspy-voice vocalist fits well with the tight and punchy hard rock music that covers the spectrum from Dischord-like progressive hardcore to Southern boogie hard rock. This post-punk/indie-rock band benefits from effectual use of such rock 'n' roll tricks as cool breaks and catchy choruses on such standout tracks as "iScrapbook" (video in production as I write) and "I'll Buy You the Fucking Single".

-Tom "Tearaway" Schulte



NUMBERS ON NAPKINS WAITING FOR TOMORROW BAD STAIN RECORDS

Nothing new, and not that great. Maybe I can find some good things to say, though. It is kind of funny that there is a song called "Fat Chicks" about—you guessed it—how fat girls always want him and how that annoys him. Well, my friend, if your band was a little better, then you could probably get some hot little hardbodies, too. I'd like to commend the bravery that it takes to actually put forth lyrics about getting head and getting pissed when your threesome leaves you out for round two. I am all for original creativity, and there is a lot of that here. This band could definitely be good someday if they concentrate less on the lifestyle and more on the music.

-Thomas Murray



ONE TRUE THING FINALLY... PLAY THE ASSASSIN

One True Thing's latest 12-track release further solidifies the current Long Island band gold rush that many record companies are perpetuating, as the quartet plays an undeniably catchy brand of rock not too far off the mark of neighboring bands Taking Back Sunday and Brand New. Only difference is that OTT employs a female lead singer whose delivery falls somewhere between Mazzy Star and Cranberries, a device that gives FINALLY... an edge which most of its peers bands lack. Songs like "In a Whisper" sounds like the perfect background music for a love scene in a tender teenage romantic comedy, while the teeth gnashing bounce of "Do You Remember" and the sinewy groove of "Monster" will give throngs of maladjusted youth something to pogo to. One True Thing's melancholy dream pop meets vibrant mod rock style is refreshingly different, yet fits right along your dime a dozen emo and screamo bands crying in their beer.

-Mike SOS



ORANGE ISLAND THE MORNING AFTER RISE RECORDS

Boston's Orange Island is playing a non-poseur version of radio-friendly emo pop music. The energy level is low, which makes listening to *THE MORNING AFTER* a bit of a drag. I don't think Orange Island has the magic, and I do hate their name, so thank goodness that this disc is an EP containing only five songs. I don't want to be so negative, but I just could not get into this album.

-H. Barry Zimmerman

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PARCHMAN FARM
PARCHMAN FARM
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The Mose Allison song "Parchman Farm" was recorded by John Mayall's Bluesbreakers, but it's called "Parchment Farm" when done by Blue Cheer. Cross the two varieties of power blues, and you have an idea what this neo-stoner-rock band sounds like. The primitive rock 'n' soul band has an exciting album here that will go over big with fans of Queens of the Stone Age.

-Tom "Tearaway" Schulte



PERFUMA
HUMANS ARE DANGEROUS
RADIO BREAKDOWN

Cross-pollinate Weezer, Ben Folds Five, The Beach Boys, and angst-ridden rock from every age group and you've got the sticky sweet sundries of New Jersey's Perfuma. This five-track EP is remarkably diverse, spanning guitar rock to sweeping melodies to quirky love songs that every kid with a broken heart can relate to. Candy coated vocals, flavorful synths, and '77 style punk guitars duke it out on "Sleeping + Screaming", while a more Beatles-esque, beat driven affair can be found on "The Story of Michael", complete with contagious backing vocals. Perfuma's expansive array of sounds places the band far ahead of many of its peers, and ultimately may be what garnishes them the attention the group deserves.

-Mike SOS



PLAN OF ATTACK
THE WORKING DEAD
ORGANIZED CRIME

It's simple: Plan of Attack play awesome hardcore punk that is fast, aggressive, dark, angry, and threatening—just as it should be—on the 18 blistering tracks of THE WORKING DEAD (what I believe to be the band's second LP). Meanwhile, many topics are covered lyrically, including the monotony and dead-end aspect of the working-life rut (which could be guessed from the record's title and artwork), as well as all sorts of things that bother the band, such as certain types of people they can't stand (viz., "pretentious punks", poseurs, liars, and back-stabbers (to name a few)). If you like your hardcore super fast, intense, and loud, you'd be doing yourself a great favor getting acquainted with Plan of Attack.

-Janelle Jones



PREACHER
GONE TO TEXAS
FROM THE HEARTLAND
SINISTER LABEL

Anyone interested in the harder edges of rock music will want to get in on the ground floor of PGTT, a melodic hardcore act from Bettendorf, Iowa, who mix metal and hardcore (but shun the theatrics and posturing of both genres) with pianos and other non-power-chord-driven instruments and sport two amazing vocalists. The music offered on HEARTLAND, their third EP, is unquestionably some of the most intense and severe allowed by the FCC, pushing and shoving the listener forward and backward, struggling to drag itself through the muck and filth of human loss, suffering, and, ultimately, redemption. Throw in a fuck-it punk ethic, and PGTT comes off as one of the more inspiring bands around. Comparisons to a less technique-obsessed The End or a far less bloated Poison the Well would not be off the mark.

-jck.



REDLIGHT HALO
MAKE YOUR MAKER
THE LOCAL CANNERY RECORDING COMPANY

This is a pretty solid EP. For the most part, Redlight Halo offers up some pretty straightforward rock music with leanings toward bands as diverse as Hot Water Music, Fugazi, Quicksand, and Nirvana. The album is filled with emotion, but it's nothing like emo (which is a good thing, in my opinion). At times, the album is filled with raw emotion (like on "Rabbit Got a Gun"), but the guys in Redlight Halo have no problem showing a mellow side, as well. The only drawback to this EP is that it's an EP. After listening to the tracks on this disc, I was left wanting more. This is a very good introduction to a very creative and intriguing rock group.

-Dane Jackson



ROCKET SCIENCE
ETERNAL HOLIDAY
MODULAR

Rocket Science's third album, ETERNAL HOLIDAY, finds the Australian garage-rock/new-wave-tinged band coming up with mixed results. To wit, some tracks are EXTREMELY good: the upbeat rocker "Modern Life", perhaps so palatable because of frontman Roman Tucker's odd resemblance to Roger Miret's vocal stylings in his Disasters mode; the very retro-sounding gem "Too Tough to Care"; "Dressed to Kill", a fast and quirky number that sees drummer Kit Warhurst seizing the mic; the moody, mellower, alluringly dark "Strange Outside"; and the spirited, ass-shakin' finale "Blow Up". However, amongst these high-quality songs are some equally annoying ones worth mentioning for the bad taste they leave in one's mouth: the monotonous "Sex Call"; and even worse, "Connect Me". And then there are ones that make not much of an impression at all: the unmemorable "See the Sun" and the organ-laden "We the People" come to mind.

-Janelle Jones



RYAN MUDD & THE STUFF
S/T
INDEPENDENTLY RELEASED

Taking cues from legendary bands such as The Damned and 'DI, Ryan Mudd & The Stuff play raucous punk 'n' roll not for the faint of heart. Although Mr. Mudd's gruff baritone vocals don't always match the band's ferociously raw attack, this six-track teaser is enough to pique my interest. Looks like it's time to take that old studded leather jacket out of storage.

-Matthew Siblo



SATAN'S PILGRIMS
THE BEST OF
MUSICK RECORDS

Now, this is just plain old fun surf, garage, raunchy instrumental rock at its finest! Fantastic straight-up music to play as the soundtrack to anyone's day. Satan's Pilgrims do their Master's bidding and completely hypnotize the listener into a frenzy of 1950s-'60s vibrations. These pilgrims of the underworld have been infiltrating Earth for about two decades now and have amassed not only legions of zombies but a string of underground hits contained in this huge collection of tracks, including their fun take on "The Godfather Theme". Disc two also contains new, rare, and unreleased material, making for a total of 30 tracks of hellfire and brimstone. Here's proof that The Flaming Lips were right when they said, "Hell's got all the best bands / Anyway."

-Norberto Gomez, Jr.



SHINDIG
THE BEGINNING IS YOUR END
UNDECIDED

Now, this is emo, but in such a good way! There is no pretension here, just 110% emotion delivered through heartfelt vocals and acoustic guitar. With truly dark lyrical content and theme, Shindig puts forth a valiant effort on the new full-length THIS BEGINNING IS YOUR END. Richie Ray is the man behind the music, and his honesty has earned him lots of attention and credit in the music industry. Shindig has already shared the stage with the likes of Fugazi, Saves the Day, and Thursday, has played stages at Warped Tour, has had a spot on MTV's TRL. Check him out before he's the next big thing.

-tChow



SHORT STORY
I KISSED YOU GOODBYE, YOU KISSED ME GOODBYE
LONELY TREE RECORDS

I swear that there's some sort of factory that churns out bands/records like this. It seems that just about any nitwit with some Atticus gear and a friend who has an extra couple thousands can put out an "honest and emotionally-purging" record. How can anyone judge the merit of these bands when they all sound exactly the same? As a reviewer, it's become so frustrating that I can't even conjure up new and inventive insults every time. You want the short story? This record blows, and chances are you probably already own it in one form or another.

-Matthew Siblo



SICK OF IT ALL
OUTTAKES FOR THE OUTCASTS
FAT WRECK

Sick of It All have become the elder statesmen of hardcore through sheer perseverance, and the New York quartet's latest release of B-sides, live cuts, and rarities celebrates the outfit's longevity. Cleaning out the closets, the band uncovered 15 tracks for all of its fans to enjoy, ranging from the Sham 69 classic "Borsal Breakout" to the gritty punk rock of "My Little World". While some of these tracks can be found on tribute albums and film soundtracks, the majority of the material has been released for the first time for both longtime fans and newcomers to enjoy, and makes for a nice complement to your Sick of It All collection. Spanning a 12-year timeframe, OUTTAKES FOR THE OUTCASTS fills in the gaps and properly unleashes the unheard aggression by these hardcore pioneers.

-Mike SOS



SIXTY MILES DOWN
SINK OR SWIM
SELF-RELEASED

New Jersey metal clan Sixty Miles Down are big on dark, heavy hooks à la Alice in Chains, Il Nino, and 40 Below Summer. On the quintet's 12-track disc, it's hard not to stumble upon thick, rollicking guitars like the ones found on "Dead Weight", "Resolution", and "Broken Down", but there's a lot more to SINK OR SWIM than one mood. In fact, the ominous piano performance on "Raise the Dead" gives the track an eerie glow, while the contagious melody of "What You Never Had" sounds as if the band could be featured on mainstream radio. Overall versatile, (but at its best when the tone is considerably bleak), Sixty Miles Down combine the wares of Down, COC, Staind, and Godsmack with all of the melodic crunch you crave.

-Mike SOS



SIMPLY WAITING
THE SUBTLE DYNAMICS BETWEEN THE WINDSHIELD AND
THE REARVIEW
A SMALL VOICE SCREAMS WORLD

Simply Waiting is one of those band's whose sound you just can't put your finger on. Their promotional packet pitches them as a band who is able to appealed to a wide range of listeners, and I would have to agree. From tracks driven by intense piano parts to slower, melodic, acoustic-driven songs, their new full-length covers all bases. This rising band from Ohio is worth a listen (and when you give it one, check out the track "Paper in Hand").

-tChow



SLOE
THE NIGHT ALL SYSTEMS FAIL
PUNK! RECORDS

I haven't heard an album that's not a death-metal album with so many references and allusions to death in a very long time. It's almost as if a third of the album is devoted to the subject. Luckily, the band's talent overshadows their morbid fascination. I'll admit that after hearing "Everyone's Beautiful, Everyone's Dead", I was ready to write Sloe off as a noisy, no-talent band. Luckily, the album started getting better after that track. What began as a worthless piece of noise turned into a very solid rock album. Sloe actually created an album that is creative and innovative. If you can get past the horrible first song and the fascination with death, THE NIGHT ALL SYSTEMS FAIL is a worthwhile album.

repeat after me: CDs, CDs, CDs, CDs



SOCIETY'S DOGS
UP ALL NIGHT
SELF-RELEASED

Long Island rock outfit Society's Dogs play rock with the kind of fervor that you can only find when seasoned musicians collaborate together. The 10-track offering combines hard rock's driving guitars on "Outlaw" with the Springsteen-esque storytelling lyrical delivery of tracks like "Play the Game", making a sturdy slab of no frills, meat and potatoes rock 'n roll. While Society's Dogs isn't afraid to rip it up with a bluesy rock shuffle on tracks like "Hiding Away", cuts like "Raise the Roof" display a different side of the versatile group, featuring an acoustic guitar shuffle as well as a stylish saxophone that wouldn't sound out of place on a Rolling Stones album. Society's Dogs combine mature grooves and well-textured songwriting, making an album that any fan of good old fashioned rock 'n roll is bound to enjoy.

-Mike SOS



S.O.S.
S/T
PERFECT VICTIM

Well, a quick click to S.O.S.' Website brings this brief, to-the-point message: "We broke up." So, what's left of this Boston band is this six-track, self-titled EP that ain't too shabby, as it's rife with some pretty cool hard-hitting hardcore with plenty of breakdowns and screamy, abrasive, oft-pleading vocals that add a bit more emotion to the compositions than the instrumentation would lend on its own (see "Intro to Nearism" for a prime example). One place where this is NOT the case, however, is the final offering, the lone instrumental, "Save Our Souls Part 1", which is, even sans vocals, the most emotive, affecting piece on the CD, as the music's slower, lighter, more intricate, and infused with a sense of longing not found in such abundance anywhere else on the EP.

-Janelle Jones



STAR STRANGLED BASTARDS
RED, WHITE, AND DEAD!
RODENT POPSICLE

This ain't your momma's music. Star Strangled Bastards play the kind of old-school punk that makes teenagers light things on fire and babies burst into loud, obnoxious crying. While you will have some difficulty deciphering singer Joel Nielsen's lyrics due to the usual gruff yells, if you happen to decipher a few along the way, you will find songs of politics and rage. Fans of Bad Brains, The Exploited, and Total Chaos will be sure to eat this one up.

-Zac



STEREOFUX
S/T
DRAGONSHUT RECORDS

Like their boring, ready-for-modern-rock name suggests, Stereoflux play mundane pop/rock that's reminiscent of faceless mid-tempo acts such as Our Lady Peace. Most tracks are sound like nothing more than sludgy faux-metal with melodies that beg to be segued right into the latest from Three Doors Down. Remember, kids: do not listen while operating heavy machinery.

-Matthew Sible



STREET DOGS
BACK TO THE WORLD
BRASS TACKS RECORDS

BACK TO THE WORLD is full of classic-style punk anthems, ready to be taken to the streets. But one should expect nothing less from Street Dogs. Fronted by original Dropkick Murphys lead singer Mike McColgan, this army of experienced musicians have produced an incredible follow-up album on their new label, Brass Tacks Records. Carrying heavy remnants of the Irish ballad feel familiar to McColgan, BACK TO THE WORLD is packed with street-fight anthems, hard-/punk-rock roots, and the necessary beer-drinking sing-along songs we've all grown to know and love. This just feels right. Go out and buy it right now!

-Carley Charpentier



STRYCHNINE
BORN IN A BAR
TKO

Oakland, CA's Strychnine has crafted the perfect hardcore punk sound on BORN IN A BAR. Sounding like a cross between Murphy's Law, Black Flag, and Zeke, songs like the self-titled rocker (complete with piano) and "Follow Yer Leader" emanate with the street punk sensibilities you can't get from the punk rock today. The buzzsaw twin guitar assault on tracks like "Lil' Duvel" and "Idiot for You" are bound to raise the ire of any moshpit, while the Motorhead meets Ramones stomp of "Icons" is a simple pleasure that will assist you wrecking any room you see fit. Strychnine will appeal to everyone sick of what gets passed down as punk today, as BORN IN A BAR gives two middle fingers and a kick in the ass to every pretty boy punk band on the landscape.

-Mike SOS



SUBMISSION HOLD
WHAT HOLDS BACK THE ELEPHANT
G7 WELCOMING COMMITTEE

Submission Hold is a fierce band. Female-fronted and politically-driven, their formula of post-punk aggression truly delivers their message, as well as sets the tone for their sentiments. This Canadian four-piece has been making music for two decades now, having produced 15 official releases in their years as a band. In all that time they have remained intensely devoted to their D.I.Y. attitudes and have grown as a band.

-tChow

-Dane Jackson

お洒落好き
お洒落好き



we do these comps

and we need like bands
on it. so, like you should
email us and stuff.

skratchpunk@YAHOO.com



2005 goal: 2005 CDs



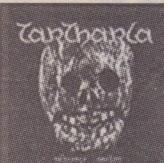
SUICIDE NOTE AND BREATHER RESIST

SPLIT EP

HAWTHORNE STREET

Fans of hardcore take note: this EP is the next bit of hardcore music to add to your collection. Absolutely heavy and brutal, both bands play mean hardcore riffs with plenty of fist-pumping action to get your adrenaline pumping. Suicide Note may prove to be the stronger of the two, with fewer moments of blandness and overall a more well planned attack on the listener's ears. Breather Resist are no weaklings, however, with enough double-bass to keep you going to get the job done with no problem whatsoever. This EP is a must for fans of A Life Once Lost, Cursed, and By the Grace of God.

-Zac



TARTHARIA

ABSTRACT NATION

CRASH

The dynamic death metal duo Tartharia come back to us from Russia with scorn on ABSTRACT NATION. Mixing in elements of power metal with a gloomy yet guttural feel, tracks like "At Every Step" cross Children of Bodom with Jag Panzer, while the riffs found on "Warlike" sound as if they were lifted straight from the Carcass songbook. Experimenting with orchestral movements on "D" as much as they are creating molten metal on the scolding "Stand in the Wind", Tartharia's bold visions leave extreme metal purists out in the cold. But, those that can appreciate melodic death metal with a twist are in for quite the treat.

-Mike SOS



THE ALLIANCE

TIME HEALS NOTHING

TRIBUNAL

The Alliance is a Michigan-based quartet whose bruising blend of metalcore is relentless in its assault on your unsuspecting ears. Swinging at you with full force, tracks like the aptly titled "Survival of the Fittest" live up to its claim, as the chugging riffs and violent rhythms persuades you to step up and guard yourself from the carnage. And Lord knows, this band knows how to dish out some punishment, as tracks like the devastating groove of the title track, the foreboding staccato riffing of "Best Wishes" and the ruthless battering brought forth from "Hard Luck" will open up a fierce pit at your next shindig in no time. Fans of the East Coast hardcore scene are really going to feel this one.

-Mike SOS



THE APATHY CODE

THICK RED MOMENT

ONCE A GREAT SURGEON

This album is filled with uninspired, monotonous, droning, and dreary music. It doesn't help that lead singer Jason Montagna seems completely tone deaf. If the actual music didn't turn you off, the poor recording and production quality would get you. The drums are too high at times, the guitars are too low, and the vocals sound distant and fuzzy. I'm not sure if this was done intentionally, but if it was, then I'd have to question the people involved with recording this album. With all its recording flaws and horrendous music, THICK RED MOMENT doesn't make it past uninspired, bland power-chord rock music.

-Dane Jackson



THE CHASE THEORY

SCRAPBOOK 1998-2001

TRIBUNAL

The Chase Theory's re-release of their favorite songs from their debut (and now out-of-print) album SCRAPBOOK and some unreleased tracks was truly a project of devotion from the people at Tribunal. It's been a while since I have seen a record label so adamant about a release or a project, but Tribunal truly believes in the unrecognized brilliance that is The Chase Theory. Their sound hearkens back to the heartfelt emo days of groundbreaking bands like Sunny Day Real Estate and the Jimmy Eat World of CLARITY. Start with "Pharaohs and Kings", and then move through the rest of the album, as the whole is just as impressive as its standout track.

-tChow



THE COMAS

CONDUCTOR

YEP ROC RECORDS

Already named one of the sleeper hits of 2004 by some in the music press, The Comas' CONDUCTOR is a wonderful, melancholy work of art influenced in part by the film DARK CITY. The album opens up with "the science of your mind," a very Bowie-esque track (à la "The Man Who Sold the World") that sets the stage for the rest of the journey. Chief songwriter Andy Herod weaves a web of love, loss, and introspection through the primary use of acoustic guitar, agonizingly beautiful vocals, and subdued melodies and noise. Altogether, the band manages to produce an extremely tight set of songs, producing a cohesive yet unique feel throughout (as achieved recently by other masters of the craft such as The Flaming Lips and Modest Mouse).

-Norberto Gomez, Jr.



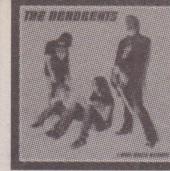
THE CURE

DISINTEGRATION

ELEKTRA

The Cure is like Jerry Rice: no longer in their prime but beloved as ever and hugely influential, a redoubtable paterfamilias. Well, the album that Robert Smith has called their masterpiece and SOUTH PARK's Kyle Broflovski declared "the best album ever" turns 16 in 2005, and it's worth looking back on. With influences ranging from Gregorian chants, Pink Floyd, and Nick Drake to Sylvia Plath and nihilism, The Cure mixed repetition, texture, interweaving melody lines, and lyrical depth to create a bewitching brew—nowhere more grandly realized than on DISINTEGRATION. "Lovesong" (KROQ's #1 song of 1989), "Pictures of You", and "Fascination Street" were the hits, but there are no misses here. This is not a concept album, yet it's completely unified. Full of long intros and instrumental passages, lugubrious tones dominate from start to finish. Additionally, nowhere in literature will you find poetry any more beautiful. "Sometimes you make me feel like I'm living at the edge of the world," Smith intones in "Plainsong"; that about sums it up.

-Gregory Moore



THE DEADBEATS

LONG HARD NIGHTS

BOOTLEG BOOZE / ROCK ALLIANCE

The Deadbeats are, unfortunately, just a mediocre Swedish rock band riding on the wave of success brought on by The International Noise Conspiracy, Division of Laura Lee, and The Hives. Unlike those three great and original bands, The Deadbeats perform boring, unmemorable rock. The vocals are like a dreary Ozzy in full monotone, and the only instrument that is at the forefront is the guitar, which shoots out nothing new or catchy. Like anything else, this scene is getting milked for everything it's worth, and it's obvious that it's starting to really get empty in there.

-Norberto Gomez, Jr.



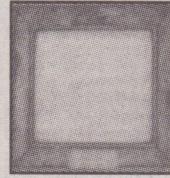
THE EXIES

HEAD FOR THE DOOR

VIRGIN

Major label rock usually takes a bad rap, and for the most part, for good reason, as talent and taste are usually substituted for style and trend. The Exies fall prey to this formula to a certain degree on the outfit's latest release, the 12-track HEAD FOR THE DOOR, yet the huge sounding output that booms out of the speakers thanks to the masterful production of Nick Raskulinecz almost washes away this realization. The drums and guitars on tracks like "What You Deserve" and "Hey You" are enormous, and almost help you lose track of the fact that The Exies sound like a cross between Hoobastank, Puddle of Mudd, and The Vines. But, with songs like "F.S.O.S." and "Dear Enemy" leering around the bend, post grunge anxiety settles in quick, and The Exies cannot escape the unfortunate fate of being second rate no matter how huge sounding the guitars are.

-Mike SOS



THE FELIX CULPA

COMMITMENT

COMMON CLOUD

The Felix Culpa is a three-piece from the unlikely state of Illinois. Their technical brand of post-hardcore indie rock delivers an intensity that is often lacking in other contemporary displays of rock. The urgency of their sound is displayed in the driving mixture of guitars, drums, vocals, and bass. To add to the depth and complexity (as well as technicality) of the album, other instruments have been used, ranging from a Rhodes to synths. Their opening track stands out most in my mind, though the rest of the album is right behind. Definitely worth your time, money, effort, whatever.

-tChow



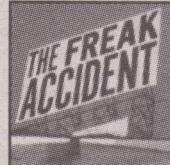
THE FEVERFEW

APPARITIONS

EYEBALL

Lighter than snowflakes falling from the sky, Bethany Spiers's ethereal voice lays upon acoustic guitar-picking in the vein of Sixpence None the Richer and Let's Go Sailing. In other words, this acoustic indie-pop is strictly for the lighthearted women looking for something to listen to after their boyfriend breaks up with them for that cute cheerleader that he always seemed to talk to a LOT during lunch break. "Selby" is the standout track, a powerful release of emotions for a lost love, while "Descending" features what is perhaps the most interesting of the album's songs. I'm convinced that this record would make the perfect soundtrack to a romantic comedy starring Jennifer Garner, Meg Ryan, or Ben Affleck. It's up to you to decide if that's a good thing.

-Zac



THE FREAK ACCIDENT

THE FREAK ACCIDENT

ALTERNATIVE TENTACLES

I am as opposed to forced rhyme as I am to fat-free cream cheese and dogs in sweaters—but for some reason The Freak Accident pulls it off. This guy's voice and pitch are so damn random and all over the place that you don't even catch the rhymes—or the fact that they are unnecessary. I was actually fascinated to the point that I listened to this album more than I had to. If you see it, you may want to grab it just to give you a little perspective on what's possible these days. It's good background music for staring contests and doing puzzles on drugs.

-Thomas Murray



THE KILLER

BETTER JUDGED BY TWELVE THAN CARRIED BY SIX

ORGANIZED CRIME

Seething with hardcore might and muscle, the five guys that comprise The Killer sure do a bang up job pouring out their aggression into nine tracks of skull shattering punishment. Armed with an obvious tough guy hardcore mentality and a heavy handed, chugging guitar attack, tunes like the NYHC beatdown inspired "Where Will You Go" and the anemic yet brutal "I Know What I Am" are perfect extensions to your Hatebreed and Madball album collection, while the faster songs like the angry "The Confessions of an Escape Artist" sound as if they could present some trouble in moshpits across the country. Metalcore at its most basic, BETTER JUDGED BY SIX THAN CARRIED BY TWELVE smacks you in the head like an errand combat boot and leaves you with the scars to prove it.

-Mike SOS



THE METEORS

THESE EVIL THINGS

I USED TO FUCK PEOPLE LIKE YOU IN PRISON RECORDS

Well, if you want to listen to an album full of anger and songs centered on wild themes such as horror, perversion, and death, well, The Meteors are the band for you to bang your head against a wall to. This music—which I guess is best classified as psycho—is a little too harsh for my liking. I mean, there is a fine line between writing songs with some anger and rage built into them and writing songs with some sick and twisted ideas. The frustrating part of all this is that the musical aspect behind this band is pretty damn good. They play a very unique style, but the emphasis of their lyrics on the grotesque and bizarre is really hard to overcome and appreciate. While I'm positive that this music will definitely appeal to a large audience who are just as crazy as The Meteors, I'll stick to material that I can relate to.

higher than a kite.

-David Walter



THE HAUNTED REVOLVER CENTURY MEDIA

The Haunted return, with an old friend in tow, as former vocalist Peter Dolving comes back to the fold on REVOLVER, a scalding blend of Swedish aggression and menacing metallic might. 13 tracks deep of impenetrable metal is what tracks like the ominous crawl of "Abysmal" and the uplifting anthemic guitar work of "All Against All" bring to the dance, which is actually more like a mosh when you consider this quintet's penchant for chugging riffs and hyper speed percussive work. The Haunted have undergone many lineup changes throughout its career, yet at this time, songs like the Pantera-esque slow burn of "Burnt to a Shell" and the mutated hardcore piece "Who Will Decide" (complete with vocals from Sick of it All's Lou Koller) finds the band sounding effortlessly brilliant. For a metal wake up call, check out REVOLVER and feel the fire firsthand.

-Mike SOS



THE MILITIA GROUP COMPILATION TUNES '04 VERSION 1.5 THE MILITIA GROUP

Here we have a pretty eclectic roster of artists on the Militia Group: the emotional, falsetto vocals of Lovedrug, the pop/rock of Reeve Oliver, the somewhat screamo of Anadivine, the nice melodic rock of Brandson, the pop of Cartel, and the slow sadness of Umbrellas. Overall, this label has a nice mix of music for listeners of different tastes. They also have much potential for hits within their catchy songwriting and popular styles.

-Norberto Gomez, Jr.



THE REASON RAVENNA SMALLMAN RECORDS

This album has like a weird Spartan theme. The lyrics discuss conquering shit and destroying...but they are really good in other parts. Yes, the lyrics are like personal thoughts from a messed-up mind but they seem like poetry. The singer—or "narrator," as they call it—has a wide variety of vocal offerings and is backed-up well by two of his bandmates (who also rock the guitar). The energy and originality that pumps out of this disc makes me really want to see these guys live—and even though I am against dope, might do some with them to see what they are really like. Oh, wait: they are Canadian. Never mind.

-Thomas Murray



THESE LIES...MORE THAN THEY'LL EVER KNOW RODENT POPSICLE

More-than-capable five-piece These Lies should impress fans of the genre with hectic and frenetic rockers like the great one-two punch of "Enemies and Friends" and "Now It's Time", the couplet of songs that kick off the 13-minute, seven-track record. Lyrically, the EP deals mostly with socio-political issues exposing lies, taking a stand, fighting for what's right, etc. Though essentially a street-punk band, they incorporate different elements into their sound to add some additional flavor, as on the more rock 'n roll-influenced "Things Never Change", which boasts some great bass lines that bring to mind those of Rancid's Matt Freeman. The awesome bass work continues onto the next track, "Bad Blood", another speedy number. Fare more on the anthemic side appears in the form of the final two compositions, the great sing-along "Our Days Are Numbered" and "Forever Bleed", making for a fitting end to a first-rate release.

-Janelle Jones



THE SHITGIVERS FREEDOM FROM REALITY IN YOUR FACE RECORDS

Crude recording quality emphasizes a gloomy doom-punk element to such tracks as "I Don't Care", but the overwhelming feel is snotty old-school punk. While the album is evenly good, it is so even that no particular tracks stand out. Despite the use of choruses and catchy repeated lines full of rebellion and angst, nothing here rises to the level of a

punk anthem.



THE SOUND OF ANIMALS FIGHTING TIGER & THE DUKE STARS AND SATELLITES

This Drive-Thru Records supergroup has members of Finch, Saosin, and Rx Bandits. The screamed vocals of Anthony Green and the Rx Bandits guitars with the progressive-rock knob up to 11 will give you an idea of how this punk-rock opera sounds. The four acts of post-emo sophisticates' noise-rock opera are connected by electronic interludes. This exciting, energetic, ambitious release succeeds and harbinger well as the debut release on TSOAF member Rich Balling's (Rx Bandits) label.

-Tom "Tearaway" Schulte



THROUGH THE EYES ELECTION SELF-RELEASED

Through the Eyes utilize a sound that mixes AFI, Funeral for a Friend, and Thump on its five-track EP. Fast, catchy riffs, melodic choruses, and impassioned vocals help songs like "Lumbar" move with the kind of fervor that many of today's mod punk outfits use. Even though the disc is a bit under produced, it manages to capture the outfit at its most raw.

The breakdowns are surprisingly tight, and the group's strong sense of dynamics, shown especially on "Brimstone", include a full-on, horned hand rock out section that only the most defiant can deny. Through the Eyes have got everything in place to rock you, and do a stellar job on ELECTION.

-Mike SOS

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TIGER MOUNTAIN
GET ALONG LIKE A HOUSE ON FIRE
LUCKY CAT



I couldn't believe how much I disliked this album the first time I heard it, so I let a few friends listen to it, and my girlfriend said simply, "This shit is weak!"—and everyone else seemed to concur. While this should be expected from a New York band named after a Brian Eno album and containing the old Nada Surf drummer; it is unacceptable for an ex-Murphy's Law bassist. The songs are catchy at times, but frankly, all the critics currently comparing these pussies to the early Stones or The Replacements should be punched in the stomach. They sound like The Smithereens, you assholes—lukewarm college rock played by guys desperately in need of a bad acid trip or an abusive girlfriend.

-jck.

TWENTY2
UNSTABLE
NEW SCHOOL RECORDS!

These guys have been around for a pretty long time, but this EP is my first exposure to Twenty2. After listening to it, I'm kind of bummed that it took me so long to discover this Canadian punk band. Essentially, Twenty2 is a pop-punk band in the same vein as All, Descendents, and No Use for a Name. With UNSTABLE, JonH and gang have crafted six very tight and very enjoyable pop-punk songs for all of us to listen to. If you're a fan of any of Fat Wreck Chords' roster of pop-punk bands, you won't be disappointed with Twenty2. UNSTABLE is perfectly crafted in every way. The songs are tight and catchy as hell, and the disc has enhanced features, to boot. This has made me want to pursue previous releases.

-Dane Jackson



TRISTANIA
ASHES
SPV

Let's face it, Tristania hasn't been around very long. But since their humble debut, WIDOW'S WEEDS, they've kicked a lot of ass. With ASHES, however, Tristania has severely upped the ante for what a symphonic doom-metal band should bring to the table. From shimmering acoustic guitar passages to utter gut-wrenching pieces of apocalyptic bliss, ASHES travels quickly from one end of the metal spectrum to the other. Complete with a mixture of harsh screams and melancholy sighs, the amount of balance achieved is a most noteworthy accomplishment. Fans of Insomnium, Black Sabbath, and Bathory should not go without this one.

-Zac



UNPERSONS
SELF-PORTRAIT EP
LIFE IS ABUSE

Sometimes the uglier and nastier a band is, the better. In the case of Unpersons, we're talking really fucking nasty and really fucking ugly. This EP is Unpersons' fourth release (according to the handy IV on the CD spine) and shows the band getting more and more intense. Treading the same muck-infested swamps as bands like Eyehategod, Keelhaul, and most bands on the Hydra Head label, Unpersons throw in the always welcome vocal style of legendary Seattle splatter-rockers The Accused. In other words, their singer sounds like he is being strangled to death. What puts SELF-PORTRAIT in a class pretty much of its own are the atmospheric melodic bits between the fury and the fact this is one 15-minute track of pure annihilation.

-Jason Schreurs



UNWRITTEN LAW
HERE'S TO THE MOURNING
LAVA RECORDS

This is it. After a while in the recording studio and a few court cases, the guys from Unwritten Law are back and with a vengeance. HERE'S TO THE MOURNING is an incredible collection of tracks packed with truthful lyrics, emotional ballads, and the endless array of talent we've known Unwritten Law to demonstrate. Lead singer Scott Russo's voice is as sultry as ever. This bad boy lets everything out in HERE'S TO THE MOURNING. With songs like "Because of You" resembling "Callin'"-style ballads and singles like "Save Me" screaming a cry for help, the guys in Unwritten Law are ready to bear it all—and in doing so are bound for unprecedented success. Buy this album.

-Carley Charpentier



VARIOUS ARTISTS
IT'S A TEAM MINT XMAS VOL 2
MINT

The futility of reviewing a Christmas album in February is not lost on me, but if you're planning the best year-end ever for next year, you should think about picking up any contribution Team Mint makes to the holiday spirit. First there was a 7", now a CD, this time expanding the original with artists like the lo-fi Tennessee Twin, Atomic 7, punk veterans The Smugglers, and newcomers young and sexy. Also included is Carolyn Mark's hilarious ode to dysfunction, "The Christmas Song"; and an all-star gaggle of Mint artists doing the modern classic "Do They Know It's Christmas?". But the real gem here is the track offered by The Buttless Chaps, who not only sport the world's best name but also the most original sound, a Johnny Cash-fronted Galaxy 500. Certainly for those with impeccable taste.

-jck



VARIOUS ARTIST
ORGANIZED CRIME RECORDS COMP
ORGANIZED CRIME RECORDS

All the bands here are serious hardcore maniacs. And if you dig the aggressive, brutal rock, this comp disc from Organized Crime Records is a must-have. Deciding which tracks are the standout cuts is all a matter of taste, because every band here is tearing up what they are doing. Sidewalk's "Living With It" is a 44-second jewel, and xDISCIPLEx A.D.'s "Swordpath" is a thrashing killer. Overall, Organized Crime Records has aligned a fantastic roster of hardcore acts that deserves your money and respect. This is a great way to find your next favorite band(s). This is an offer that you can't refuse.

-H. Barry Zimmerman



VARIOUS ARTISTS
POLICIA—A TRIBUTE TO THE POLICE
THE MILITIA GROUP

First off, I don't like The Police at all, so I was biased from the beginning; but this album boasts some interesting interpretations that may rekindle interest in a band lamer than Hydrox cookies and powdered milk. If you are into what is widely known as "punk covers," then you may get a kick out of this collection. Some of the new versions are worth rocking out to, while others sound just like the originals. All right, fine: I like The Police. This album helped me realize it. I knew more lyrics than I realized.

-Thomas Murray



VARIOUS ARTISTS
SACTO SCENE REPORT
TKO

TKO Records has always been true to keeping punk rock about the music and not the intangibles that go along with it, an admirable pursuit for certain. The label's recent installment of the collection they dub as The Scene Report is yet another example of the care they take for the genre, as this volume showcases five Sacramento, CA based punk rock bands with five different punk approaches. From the street punk of Whiskey Rebels and Pressure Point, to the harder, in your face delivery of Killing the Dream, to the garage-esque rock stomp of The Secrets, to the lace up your boots and slam into some inspired stomp that The Roustabouts prompt, TKO once again gives the listener a solid cross-section of music as well as a good bang for the buck. An affordable alternative to MTV's mall punk, these compilations are perfect for the novice looking to dig deeper, or for the experienced fan looking for new thrills.

-Mike SOS



VARIOUS ARTISTS
THIS IS SOLID STATE VOLUME 5
SOLID STATE

The fifth installment of THIS IS SOLID STATE kicks off with a strong and exceedingly heavy number by Norma Jean titled "In Reference to a Sinking Ship", a song that'll appear on their upcoming LP. This track, along with fare from the tense and urgent Showbread, the utterly sick and spastic The Chariot, and mewithoutYou (who go the experimental/noise-rock/Jesus Lizard route with the meandering, VERY aesthetically pleasing "4 Word Letter") are some of the better offerings on a record that showcases a multitude of varying takes on hardcore. Sheer brutality is served up by the aforementioned Norma Jean and The Chariot; Figure Four; the chaotic, all-over-the-place He Is Legend; and the oppressive, metal-tinged Demon Hunter (barring their occasional ill-advised and uncalled-for forays into melodicism, that is); while bands like Underoath, Dead Poetic, Emery, and the multi-faceted, now-defunct Beloved belt out the melodic hardcore. Definitely a great purchase for fans of any of these bands.

-Janelle Jones



VON IVA
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This six-song EP from San Francisco's dreamy synth-rock female quartet Von Iva showcases all the band's strengths...and a few of its shortcomings. Fronted by the incredibly talented Jillian Iva (whose voice sounds as if she's channeling all the great black female soul singers) and backed by bassist Elizabeth Davis (from 7-Year Bitch),

this band has all the credentials. With the lack of a lead or rhythm guitar, the disco-pumping tunes on this album are driven mainly by Bex's overwhelming keyboard melodies and Lay Lay von Guthrie's dance-beat drum rhythms. Perhaps the only drawback on these songs, with their unbridled energy, is the lack of a real guitar player to add some musical variety. But these girls are so foxy that nobody's going to give a damn whether they have a guitar player at a live show or not. Look for this band to start doing gigs at televised fashion and awards shows.

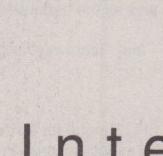
-Dug



WORLD WAR IX
PANIC ATTACK
ELIS EIL

Looking for a no-nonsense, no frills garage punk rock band? Check out the 11-track endeavor from World War IX, whose brand of nervous punk rock has a discernible old school gloss. Tracks like the opener "Thank God It's Monday" echo a common theme over a jumpy beat, while the groovy bass in "Body Dump" has a Misfits feel. Harkening back to the days when punk rock was dirty and unrepentant, PANIC ATTACK is ripe with attitude, from the invigorating title track to the GG Allin cover "NYC Tonight". Frenzied without being overpowering, World War IX's latest collection is worth it for the people that still incessantly spin their Buzzcocks and Black Flag albums.

-Mike SOS



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thoughts on skateboarding

Greg Williamson

Frontside Invert

ChaumpaRamp, MD

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Photo: Bill Grayson



skateboard (skátbôrd)

n.

A short narrow board having a set of four wheels mounted under it, ridden in a standing or crouching position and often used to perform stunts

Scott Tupper

Frontside Air

Ocean Bowl, MD

Photo: Bill Grayson



thoughts on skateboarding

chris forrette

"I used to skate every day until I got a car."

Greg Williamson

Backside Invert

ChaumpaRamp, MD

Sponsors: Plug Skateboards

Photo: Bill Grayson





Jeff Perona

Frontside Air
Ocean Bowl, MD
Photo: Bill Grayson

kym cohen

"Me? Skateboarding? I am so uncoordinated. Walking and chewing gum requires a lot of thinking. Plus I am way too girly to do a rough sport like skating -- I don't want scuffed up knees."

thoughts on skateboarding



Susie Strege

Backside 50

Ollewood, FL

Photo: Lloyd Gillick

bill adams

“I used to skateboard but then I got fat.”

thoughts on skateboarding

andy kennedy

"Skateboarding is about as cool as hanging out in a dark parking lot with a bunch of guys on a friday night....oh ..wait."

Greg Williamson

Frontside Air

Ollewood, FL

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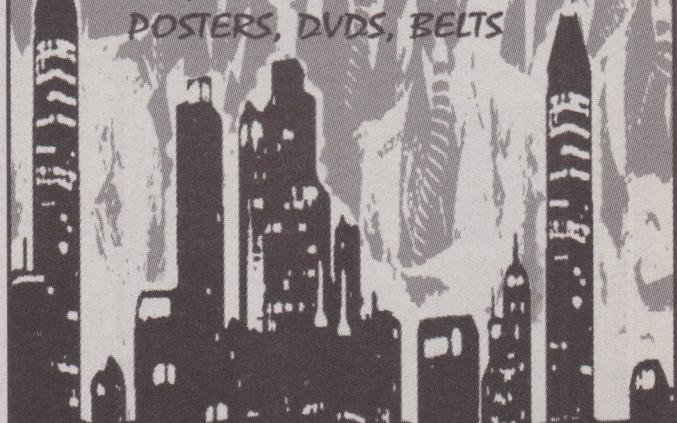
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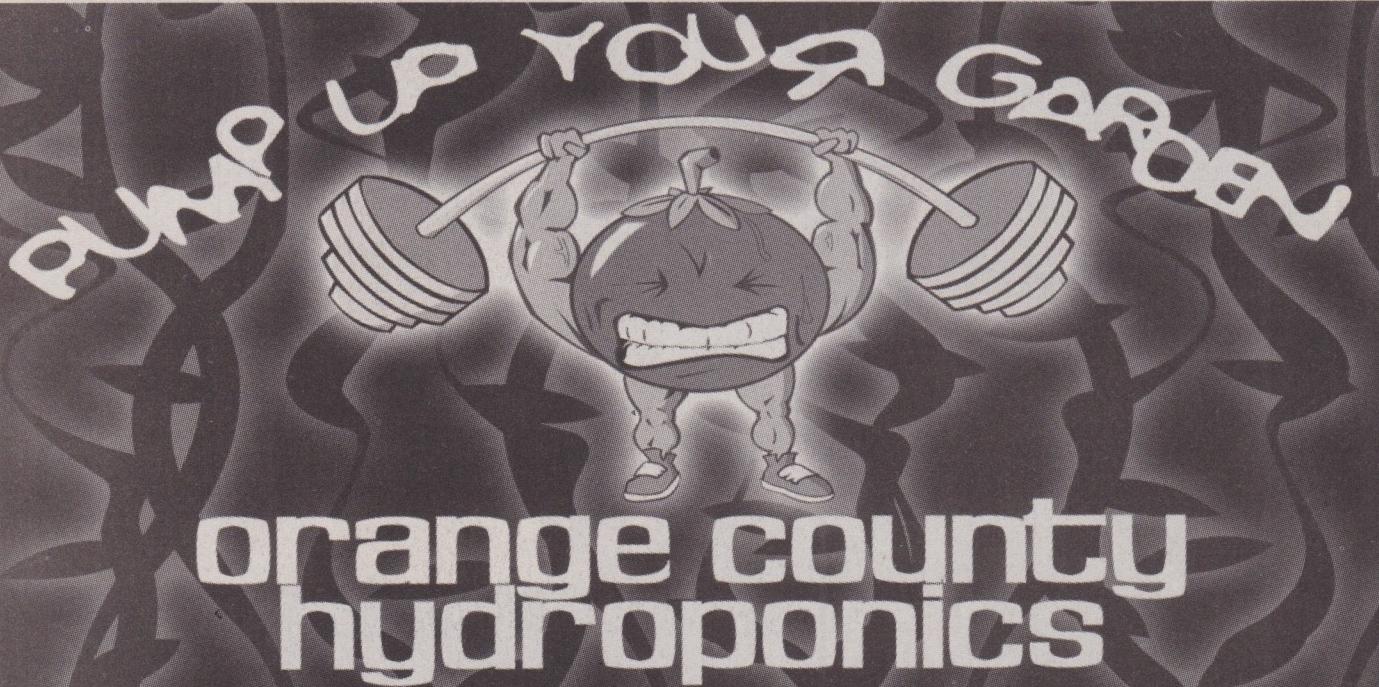
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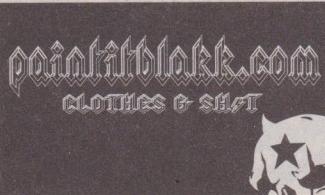
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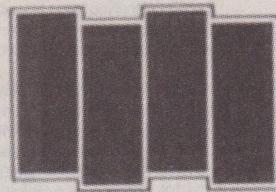
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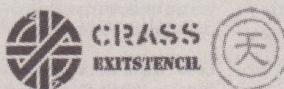
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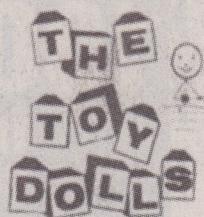
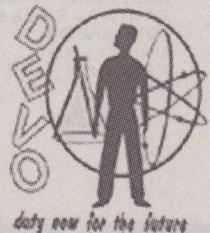
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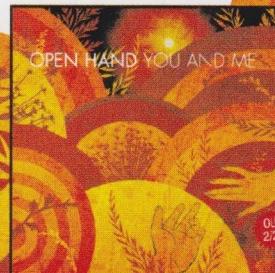
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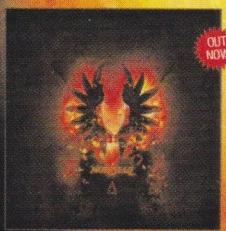
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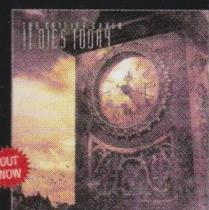
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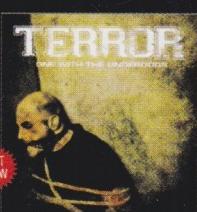
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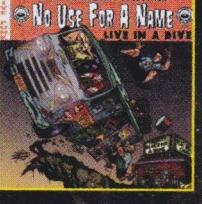
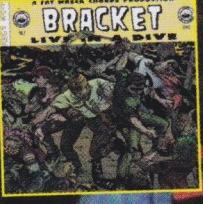
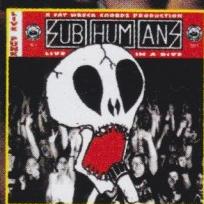
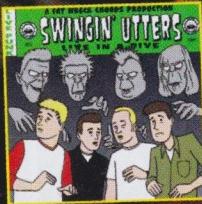


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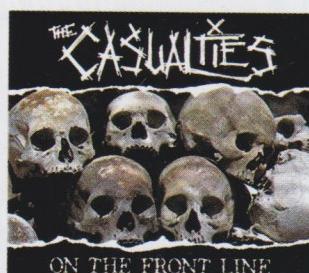
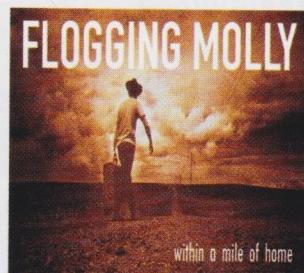
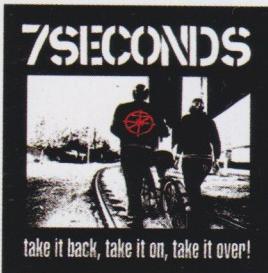
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